

Looking For A Love Supreme

THE

WIRE

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issue 22



COLTRANE NEW MEDITATIONS

THE QUEST STARS RUBEN BLADES TOM WAITS

WRAP
YOUR



FISH
IN
NOTHING
LESS.

NME

EVERY WEDNESDAY 45p.

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NEWS

the bull celebrates 25 years!

FROM 30 NOV - 22 Dec, The Bull's Head, London is holding a special Jazz festival. Sponsored by the Musicians Union and Greater London Arts, the event is intended to celebrate 25 years of Jazz at the venue, and is hoping to generate funds to offset the accumulated deficit incurred by the presentation of live Jazz.

The opening weekend acts include Ronnie Scott's Quintet, Terry Jenkins 10-piece, Elaine Delmar, Blue Note Revisited, Don Weller Quintet, Stan Tracey Quartet and Ron Mathewson Sextet. Other artists appearing include Morrissey Mullen, Back Door, Pete King Quintet, Jazz Turbo and District Six.

One notable feature on 9th Dec is The Fathers and Sons Band - who are Stan Tracey and son Clark, John Dankworth and son Alec.

Further info can be obtained from Mary Greig on 01-802 1329.

THE WIRE PHOTO EXHIBITION WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE VENUE THROUGHOUT THIS EVENT

pizzas on the road

THE PIZZA Express All Stars also take to our embattled concert halls this month. Their tour includes these dates: Plymouth Theatre Royal (4), Swindon Saracens Head (5), Bridgwater Arts Centre (6), Bognor West Point Tavern (7), Birmingham Streatham Hotel (8), Witney The Sildings (10), Portsmouth The Cambridge (11), Welwyn Garden City Main Suite Campus West (12), Norwich Premises (13), Southport Arts Centre (14), Newcastle Corner House (15), Middlesbrough White Swan (16), Dundee Bonar Hall (17), Sheffield Leadmill (18), Manchester Band On The Wall (19), Douglas 10M Villiers Hotel (20).

tallinn it like it is

BRITISH, GERMAN and American jazz musicians (Alan Skidmore's group tenor tonic, German clarinettist Hans Kumpf, American saxophonist John Zorn etc.) will perform concerts and take part in informal jam sessions in Leningrad and Tallinn on March 23rd-30th 1986.

Places are also available for other musicians and jazz enthusiasts. For booking form and conditions, please contact Mrs Kerall Ulbo-Knowars, 110 St George's Road, London SE1 6EU. (01-633 9764)

students swing in Essex

THE UNI of Essex, Colchester is commencing a Student Music Society which is to include improvised music, with concerts by leading artists. Anyone wishing to partake in these evenings, either playing or contributing in any way, should contact Ian Hackett on (0206) 861946.

scala goes latin

AN ALL-NIGHT Latin jazz dance session takes place at London's Scala cinema on 28 December. Tommy Chase live rare archive film with Coltrane and Mingus, four DJs. Tickets £4.50 on the door.



Ronnie: plenty of bull

brum goes bongo crazy!

REGULAR TUES eve Bongo nights at the Here n Hounds, Kings Heath, Birmingham at a staggeringly low price of 50p admission. The club will play all that's best in African, Reggae, Salsa and Soca.



Would you buy a pizza from these men?

swingin' at bay 63

RECENTLY OPENED at what was once the Acklam Hall near Portobello Rd., The Round Sound At Bay 63 (Mobley will be having hit records next) provides Friday night West London with the kind of club venue it has lacked for some time. With resident DJ Dave Hucker spinning the music of two continents (and a smattering of Islands), The Round Sound features music by the likes of Somo Somo, El Sonido De Londres, London School of Samba, The Happy End and The Frank Chickens. Open 'till 2.00am on Friday nights the club offers drinks at pub prices and consumables of a more solid nature.



The Guest Stars

guest stars on tour

FAMOUS BEAT and swing combo The Guest Stars are on tour throughout this month. The full date sheet is: Berkhamsted Civic Centre (7), Brentwood Monkey Club (8), Nottingham Bowling Green (9), Leicester Jazz Forum (10), Manchester Band On The Wall (11), Leeds Astoria (12), London Electric Ballroom (17), Milton Keynes Open University Theatre (18), Bridport Eypemouth Hotel (20), Exeter Arts Centre (21), Plymouth Jazz Club (22). The London date is the launch party for their new album - released this month.

silver tracey at bass clef

A HIGHLIGHT of December's dates at London's Bass Clef is their Christmas party - to be combined with the 25th Wedding Anniversary celebration for Stan and Jackie Tracey. Stan's quartet will be playing at the club and the date is December 22. Other points of note this month: Ian Hamer Sextet (5), Norma Winstone (15), a quintet with Don Weller and Dave Cliff (18) end in Cehoots (29).

more helpings of jelly roll

ON 12 Dec, a celebration of Jelly Roll Morton's merits as a composer, pianist and bandleader will be reviewed by John Chilton at the National Sound Archive, London. For details ring 01-589 6604.

buddy and al

TWO OF the best-known names in swing jazz are to tour Scotland from Dec 3-6. The sax and trombone team of Buddy Tate and Al Grey will appear for the first time together in Scotland. The former Count Basie stars will play concerts in Glasgow (3), Aberdeen (4), Inverness (5), and Edinburgh (5).

les parapluies de . . .

JAZZ UMBRELLA, a new venture designed to promote jazz in London, presents its first series of gigs this month at Hammersmith's Riverside Studios. The line-up is: Dave Deines Quartet/Harry Beckett Quintet (3), Brian Godding/Dave Barry & Keith Tippett/Louis Mohol/Larry Stabbins (4), Billy Jenkins with The Voice of God Collective/Soldiers Of The Road (5), Steve Lodder/John Warren Big Band (6), Steve Lacy, Steve Potts & Irene Aeby (7). All shows start at 8pm (except Lacy - 9pm) and tickets are £4 in advance or £4.50 on the door.



VAL WILMER

made in london with bailey

DEREK BAILEY is hosting an improvised music week at the Soho Poly Theatre from 16-21 Dec. All concerts commence at 8pm and tickets are £3 on the door. Guests include Phil Wachsmann, Ubiquity Orchestra, Peter Cuseck and Steve Beresford among a cast of hundreds.

tay jazz club

PLATFORM IS pleased to announce the launch of a new jazz club in Dundee - the first regular jazz night in the city for many years. The Tay Hotel is the venue for sessions which will take place every Wednesday from the 13th November.

joe henderson in london

THE GREAT hard bop tenorman Joe Henderson flies in to London for a rare appearance at the Logan Hall W1C on 3 December. Joe is bringing in his current band which includes Joanne Brackeen and Leon Thomas among the personnel. Tickets are £6 in advance from the usual Gemini outlets or £7 on the door.

brazilian blend!

BRAZILIAN CONTEMPORARY Arts will be continuing the highly successful Brazilian Disco at Busby's Charing Cross Rd, London in December. This monthly event has attracted much attention - with music being specially imported, it's the real thing! For finalised info regarding the December Event, call 01-741 9579.

club dates

BULLS HEAD, LONDON SW13 . . . (30 Nov) All Day-er Jazz Weekend £3 (Numerous artists)

SUTTON LIBRARY, SURREY (01-661 5050)

... Kenny Davern (8 Dec) 7.45pm £3.50

100 CLUB, OXFORD ST, LONDON W1 . . .

(11 Dec) 8.30pm Stan Tracey Big Band £3.50

BAND ON THE WALL, MANCHESTER . . . (3 Dec) Apitos £1.85 (5 Dec) Lou Donaldson £3

(10 Dec) Terje Rypdal Inc £2.50 (11 Dec) Guest Stars £3 (12 Dec) District Six (19 Dec)

Pizza Express All-Stars

THE 100 CLUB, LONDON . . . Ts-Africa (6 Dec) Sonda de Londres £4 (13 Dec) Ujamaa £4 (20 Dec) Morrissey Muller £4.50 (27 Dec)

District Six & Sanko £4

STRATHALLAN HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM . . .

(1 Dec) Terje Rypdal Trio 8pm (8 Dec) Pizza Express All-Stars 8pm. NOTE: Annie Whitehead (15th) CANCELLED

LEEDS TRADES CLUB . . . Xmas Party with Sim Gaillard (13 Dec)

BARBICAN CENTRE, LONDON . . . (1 Dec) Lunchtime Jazzband Rhythm (8 Dec) Lunchtime Max Collic & His Rhythm Aces

RONNIE SCOTT'S, FRITH ST LONDON . . . (30 Nov) Chet Baker Quartet (25-30 Nov)

Stan Tracey (2 Dec-7 Dec) Loose Tubes (9 Dec-4 Jan) George Melly

SOUTH HILL PARK ART CENTRE, BRACKNELL . . . (3 Dec) Gill Thompson £2.50 (10 Dec) Tommy Chase Quartet (17 Dec) Eduardo Niebla & Antonio Focione

CORNER HOUSE, HEATON, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE . . . Lou Donaldson with Sid Warren Quintet (Dec 3), Pizza Express All

Star (Dec 15), Christmas Eve 'Jam' Session, comm. noon (Dec 24).

CAEDMON HALL, GATESHEAD . . . Rick Taylor's Full Circle (Dec 13).

THE GIFT OF JAZZ



ELLA FITZGERALD · DUKE ELLINGTON
Never Before...Rhythm
The Stockholm Concert, 1966
2304 242



BOBBY HUTCHERSON
Four Seasons
SJP 210



ANTHONY BRAXTON
Four Compositions
BSR 0066



JACKIE MCLEAN
Makin' the Changes
OJC 197



CHICK COREA
Septet
ECM 1297



THE GUEST STARS
Out of Night
GS 11
GSC 11 mc



BILLIE HOLIDAY
Songs for
Distingué
Lovers
2304 243
8150554 mc



JOHN SURMAN
Withholding
Patterns
ECM 1295
8254072 CD



DAVE GRUSIN ·
LEE RITENOUR
Harlequin
GRP 91015
GRPD 9522 CD



DON CHERRY
Home Boy,
Sister Out
8274881
8274884 mc



TITO PUENTE
Mambo Diabólico
CJP 283



MAX ROACH
DOUBLE QUARTET
Easy Winners
SH 1109



BILLY COBHAM
Warning
GRP 91020
GRPD 9528 CD



PAUL BLEY
Introducing
OJC 201



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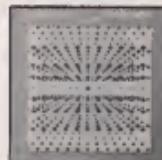
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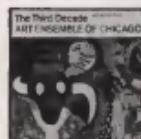
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DEPLORABLE, DISSOLUTE AND DEPRAVED

But this jazz music just wouldn't go away. JANE HENERY and CHARLES GARVIE look at how the British Establishment viewed the onset of the Jazz Age as a national disgrace.



THE PROPHETIC talents of an unknown humorous artist were used by *Punch* in 1913 when they published a cartoon which, had they but known it, foretold the story of the entire Jazz Age in Britain.

Succinctly captioned "Quelling Rebellion in Upper Tooting" it is a précis of the entire history of the British Establishment's antipathy to Jazz. In an over-stuffed Victorian morning room, draped in gloom, a pertinacious would-be-flapper sulks as her mother, a cross between Queen Victoria and Britannia, firmly declares that "there will be no Tango Teas in this drawing room".

The history books have blithely christened a period between the two world wars the 'Jazz Age' with nary a look at the revealing ephemera that our forebears left behind. The Jazz Age, they assure us, was peopled by the Bright Young Things, women of sylph-like dimensions who looked like Betty Boop and who were partnered by debonair men with plasticine hair. Their staple diet was hot music and high living and expression from the soul was their raison d'être. Teenage Rebellion was never so beautiful, so witty, so worldly-wise as it was during the Jazz Age – the great casting-off of Victorian hypocrisy, gloom and doom. However, this wasn't the case in Upper Tooting.

The Jazz Age of popular conception simply never happened in Britain. We did have a Jazz Age, of course, but it was an adulterated version diluted to the Great British Taste, like the curries brought back by our colonialists.

Jazz, an essentially black art form, was automatically unacceptable to a society which maintained its wealth from an Empire built on slavery. Permissible black culture had to be within an acceptable white frame of reference. At the turn of the century, therefore, black music was synonymous with two drawing room polkas rendering blacks to the level of piccaninnies with a perpetually happy, subservient existence on de oie Plantation. Needless to say it was unacceptable for the urban black to make a statement of creativity which was considered unbefitting to an "emancipated savage" and decidedly subversive. Anyone white, or even worse, anyone British, who appreciated or participated in this "heathen music" was something less than fit.

The media encouraged this attitude and offered up a staple diet of scurrilous tributes to feed the public's indignation. In 1927 an irate member of the Establishment wrote to the Press decrying that "savages are presumably as near nature as any. Jazz is nothing more than the music of savages. When there is any tune in it it is borrowed from so-called 'high

brow' music. That anyone can listen to, or even hear Jazz without a shudder is ridiculous – Jazz is NOT music." And a year previously one Nicolas Covello, a professor of music from Balham, was reported to have dropped dead after hearing a Jazz Band at Coney Island; his last words being "That isn't music, stop it!" Even when all was quiet on the Jazz front the Press fanned the flames by making the term synonymous with depravity, like the Leeds daily who reported on sexual offences in Yorkshire (!) and the general lapse in (women's) morals, heading the piece "SHADY JAZZ PERILS".

However, while the Establishment waged war on American Jazz depravity the music crept into Britain by the back door via the Channel. The French, who already had a black population, welcomed the new music with characteristic zeal and the scintillating Josephine Baker set the Casino de Paris ablaze with her blatantly sexual dance routines – grass skirts, bunches of bananas et al. Inspired by her success many French girls adopted the new dance style and the most internationally famous of these was Mlle Gaby Deslys who delighted Paris dancing Le Jazz, which was later evolved into La Danse Daslys.

Gaby caught the trained eye of British impresario George Edwards when he was scouting Europe for talent for his London theatres – the Gaely and Daly's. Josephine Baker's colour and earthy vivacity made her a "nitter" for the West End but Gaby was acceptably risqué (and white) and soon picture postcards of her in bathing dresses, leopard skins and bejewelled creations filled racks normally occupied by her picture-hat and parasol competitors.

While Gaby kept the Gaely box office busy Le Jazz spread further along the Strand and infected the Savoy which became the stronghold of the new music and post-war fashions. Music was provided for the Bright Young Things by the Savoy Orpheans (visualize Bertie Wooster as vocal lead) who clearly reflected the class of their patrons with their quantity English compositions such as "Me And Jane In A Plane". Whereas these ditties were an improvement on such pre-war dirges as "Give Me A Ticket To Heaven" end had some form of syncopation they were hardly Harlem.

THE SAVOY and the Ritz were also the parade ground for the new Jazz Age fashions. Although the Edwardian mode of dress had been rejected by the demi-monde the Edwardian body still remained and some strange shapes were wedged into sheath dresses and satin drapes. Perly, a postcard humourist of the time, plays on this to great

effect in his *Some Of The Beauties and What The Sea Saw* series, where he depicts the realities of flabby flappers! Twenties society magazines bear witness to the 'problem' which gave birth to the slimming industry, displaying hundreds of adverts (cheerfully in breach of the Trade Descriptions Act) promising "no self-denial dieting – no exhausting exercises – no health-injurious drugs – no vain hopes – but a healthy and harmless reduction in size and weight after every bath! If you are too stout try Clark's Thinning Bath Salts."

The bastardized music of the Orpheans and bands like Ambrose finally infiltrated the parlours of the lower middle classes and a proportion of the working classes when the gramophone became more financially accessible in the later 20s. However, Jazz was indelibly stamped on the mind of the man-in-the-street as an extension of the normal outrageous behaviour of aristocratic ne'er-do-wells with more money than sense. It was due to this back-handed initiation to the idiom that the working classes came to associate it primarily with a dance style, and, latterly, with a colourful, gaudy, outrageous way of life.

Whereas the older generations tended to leave well enough alone the young were eager to adopt the new ritzy and jazzy looks of the upper classes. Not surprisingly, shop girls and factory workers could not afford the designer dresses and expensive accessories which typified the movement end it was here (as in many places) that Jazz came to the aid of ailing industries. Christopher Thomas Ltd, who had been making dyes since 1745 and who had suffered during Victoria's drab puritanical reign, were given a new lease of life when they introduced Jazz Dyes. By repackaging their dyes as Canary Yellow, Parakeet Green, Nigger Brown and every other shade of Tropicana favoured by the Art Deco designers, they gave the working girl the ability to transform her outfit "for only fourpence".

Near-universal acceptance of the Jazz Age was only found at the Great British Seaside Resorts. Charabancs full of staid and respectable Wiffs and Daisies let rip for "Fourteen days swank" and emulated every hero and heroine of the Jazz Age that had ever dwelt in their secret imaginations. The same people who, at home, would have thought twice about eating a banana danced to Ragtime Bands and wore cuttis that would have looked over-the-top on Nazimova.

Seaside humour reached a creative peak during this time, poking gentle fun at the British at play in all their ridiculous array. However, the fact that the outburst of rebellion

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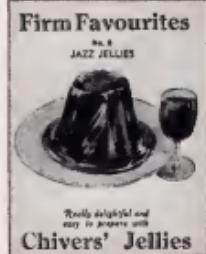
was only temporary, like a midsummer madness, is clearly underlined on Seaside postcards, particularly on one sent to the Seaside from those at home (an outmoded peculiarity) — "Make the most of your time, lad, you won't be marching about in those duds next week!" An obliquely sharp reminder that the other fifty weeks of the year were spent in Victorian greys and cloth caps in factories, back-to-back housing and spit 'n' sawdust pubs.

BACK AT home the purchase of a new Victrola did not bring new song birds such as Ruth Etting or Billie Holiday into the parlours. The working classes of the early 30s stuck to tried and trusted favourites such as 'Jew's' Formby and Flanagan & Allen. F & A were the chief protagonists of the British school of "we're poor but we're happy", a sentimental conceit cheerfully perpetuated by the Establishment. With lyrics like "Down every street, all the richest are the poor" dominating 30s parlours there was little room for the cheating men of Etting and Holiday.

The then new and exclusively working-class hobby (probably the first and last) of cigarette card collecting reveals further (in retrospect) the true face of British Jazz. These cards were almost universally collected and it is important to remember that they were intended as a sales promotion and subsequently represented the most popular interests of the day. It is therefore illuminating to discover that the featuring of dance band leaders on cards was barely in the running, sitting around sixth place in the popularity stakes. Ahead of them lay cricket, football and, humiliation of humiliations — natural history! In America Jazz was alive and well but as far as we were concerned there would be no Jazz dives in our drawing rooms.

It was the Telkies that brought American Jazz to Britain. Finally people were able to hear what they had previously only heard about, initially in artificial form via Al Jolson and later directly from black musicians themselves in films like Paramount's *The Big Broadcast* (1932). Hollywood set about smoothing the rough corners of Jazz, taking the bands out of Harlem and setting them on lurax plinths decked in Rinso-white jackets and 'anti-fizz' macassar oil. Contracts ensured that musicians adopted "fixed professional grins" and obvious reference to Harlem low-life vanished from lyrics.

British designers were quick to adopt the influence of the new films, and Jazz and Tropicene motifs were used extensively in fabrics, ceramics and illustration to the extent



that even Woolworths' items were festooned with brightly coloured cockatoos and Caribbean Jazz musicians. All of this helped to return black musicians to the acceptable white frame of reference. They had won a brief freedom from the plantations only to be returned to the coconut groves, back in the role of genial "sevege" possessed of "natural rhythm".

Although the British had finally become tolerant of the new music it never achieved popular acceptance. Contemporary record sleeves do not list top Jazz Artists like Ellington, Culloway or Armstrong as "other releases available" and the fact is irrevocably stamped on history by those tell-tale cigarette cards. Of all the sets issued featuring dance band leaders only one set includes Culloway and Ellington.

As a fine illustration of pre-war Jazz in Britain we look to a fount of wisdom as solid as Britannia — the encyclopaedia. An early 30s volume gives Jazz this scant definition — "of American Negro origin, and refers more to music which is played in syncopated time than to the steps of a dance. A Jazz Band is composed chiefly of piano, banjo, saxophone, drum, and at intervals, the voice, while other instruments are often added."

When the encyclopaedia was reprinted after the war some ten to 15 years later the definition remained the same but carried an addendum stating — "the term Jazz Band is now out of date, instead Dance Orchestra is generally used. Full size dance orchestres consist of piano, saxophones, sometimes clarinets, trumpets, trombones and occasionally strings with a percussion outfit and a Spanish guitar". The longer post-war entry takes up a fraction of a page; to the subject of "Jelly" we devote two pages. To have put Jazz through the diluting and white-washing effects of swing bands like Goodman, Miller and Dorsey seems a high price to pay to gain the respectability of such a brief, cursory and ignoble reward.

BLACK JAZZ was still bubbling under the surface in wartime America and Minton's in Harlem gave birth to Be-Bop, a term that was whispered quietly in British women's magazines throughout the 40s as an evil that all self-respecting mothers should protect their daughters from. Reactionaries, who had been grudgingly silent during the late 30s, sprang out of the woodwork once again to protest at the decadent music appreciated by antisocial (unscripted) Puerto Ricans. In 1943 Zoot Suiters in Los Angeles decided to 'hot' over

the US Government's ban on their mode of dress, giving the British Press a field day.

If there was a medal for Purple Prose it would surely go to a reporter in *Illustrated Magazine* who blustered the pages in a double-page spread of clichés. Zoot Suits were "sartorial abortions, much favoured by the jitterbug maniacs whose brains are all in their feet". He went on to describe "these 18-year-old morons" and "fatuous young fools" rampaging and "beating up innocent civilians and servicemen who criticized their attire". However, "the authorities took the sternest measures" against these "embryonic gangsters" and "their hoodlumism was short lived". Upper Tooting had been spared once again.

It seems sad but true that Britain's Jazz Age only really began after World War II as far as music was concerned, reaching its peak in the post-war pre-rock 'n' roll 50s. Children who had grown up in the 30s had been exposed to a staple diet of American cartoons with Jazz soundtracks, one of the few uncensored mediums for Jazz music. Later, after the war, they mingled with American servicemen, many of whom were still billeted here in the early 50s. A desire for things American and a taste for Jazz and Jiving at last inspired British youth to express themselves musically and British Jazz Purists began to assemble in the new Soho Jazz Clubs.

A contemporary report describes the patrons of these clubs as "something from another world. Tousle-haired youths in sweaters down to their knees, girls in flowing artist's smocks; Edwardian suits and recy tributes, never doffed", and once again the Establishment shifted uneasily. The 1950 Christmas issue of *The Sketch* published a satirical cartoon entitled "Hark! The Herald Angels Swing", showing traditional carol singers replaced by a Swing Band; but as the 50s wore on the headlines became less gentle and more lurid.

One daily announced "JAZZ PLAYERS ARE DEPRaved MEN" while another, who sent a journalist clubbing in Soho, concluded that "THESE JAZZ DIVES ARE DANGEROUS". The final word was passed by a magistrate who summed up British Jazz musicians as "deplorable, dissolute and depraved".

In 1955 it is comforting to know that nothing has changed. An attempt to play Duke Ellington on Radio Three recently evoked an irate letter to the *Radio Times*. Somewhere out there someone is still saying, "There will be no Tango Teas in this drawing room." ■

LIVEWIRE

WAYNE SHORTER

London Logan Hall

THIS GIG confirmed me in my prejudice against fusion bands. In tune after tune, a pretty, evocative theme played by Shorter against a discreet piano background was gradually forced to compete with a crescendo of threshing drums and overloud, relentlessly percussive bass. On "Beauty and the Beast" and, most damagingly, "The Three Manas", for example, Shorter's sinuous inventiveness was drowned by an ever-louder clatter of tumbling drums, squirming little pygmy bass phrases and monotonous, meaningless trills on electric keyboard, played by Al Jarreau's amanuensis Tom Canning.

The material, much of it from Shorter's new album *Atlantis*, deserves better, as does the wonderfully gifted and lyrical leader himself. I found myself yearning for the sensitive, brisk muscularity of hard bop rhythm sections, where climaxes were earned not obligatory and where the likes of Max Roach, Richard Davis et al complemented the soloists instead of drowning them. My favourite part of this concert was the encore – "Sweet Pee" – which, thanks to the absence of bass and drums, enabled Shorter, with for once sympathetic piano accompaniment, to play a relaxed and subtle solo and to prove that he is one of the finest soprano saxophonists we have.

Chris Parker

TOM WAITS

London Dominion Theatre

"Borden took all the thick facts and dropped them into the pail of his sub-history." Coming Through Slaughter, Michael Ondatje's fictional life of Buddy Bolden.

IN COURSE of this most recent appearance in Britain, Waits has gone top ten: has been exposed, in consequence, to a remarkable outpouring of well-meant nonsense, the grizzled scouse as Authentic Rock Voice, this kind of thing.

Actually what's happened is a good deal more surprising and gratifying. Time was, his bag was a drowned cocktail jazz, strong on low-life observation and meudin romanticism. (He'll get calls throughout tonight's

performance for the Old Songs.) What he's done meantime is grabbed up this bag in disgust and swung it end smacked it hard against the side of a passing trolleycar . . . and what's survived crawls out stiff and bloodied and gimlet-eyed sober. This loquacious drunk-at-the-piano is now possessed by some dry and malicious kobold, who mocks his every move as he makes it, and casts a diabolical shadow up giant behind his smoking wheezing harmonium, and his players set up at the foot of the stairs down to Hell's Kitchen:

"The most acute Americans, in the steps of the old Puritans, have been suspicious, probing people, looking for signs of evil and grace, of salvation and damnation, behind every natural fact." Greil Marcus on Robert Johnson, in *Mystery Train*.

He's funny, in an off-hand way, and so's his music. Also it's cruel and spare, a skeletal anvil klob-blues, stomping over traces of all America, absurd and serious: from Charles Ives' colliding march-bends to Tom Verlaine's glass-heeled guitar raunch, from Harry Partch's microtonal hobo copus operum to Bruce Springsteen's manly chest-sobbing, sliding by more every other All American Ruggi(jed) Hero. His musicians shrug off a casual virtuosity without ever needing to be out of shadow or in killer: Ralph Carney moves from cancerous banjo to Dixieland banjo, Marc Ribot tunes the blue guitar into gaunt cartoon, Steven Hodges and Michael Bleir and Greg Cohen turn the world into a petrified rain-forest of percussion for Waits' extraordinary sense of timing: and the man grunts and roars like the loony on the tube, and struts with the conforted elegance of a case of locomotor ataxia, and beckons sly, end tips his hat, and crucifies romance with his beaten metal sensurround and his crimp-camp mutter and rasp.

"The two acts of *Delusion of the Fury* have this in common: both convey the mood that reality is in no way real . . ." Harry Partch on his opera *Delusion of the Fury*.

Sarcasm has prodded this Kerouac word-world into something more like Wallace Stevens, where the Dharma Burns take Tea at the Palaz of Hoon. The old songs done up, "Step Right Up" and "Burma Shave" for two, are transformed into something more than exotic pastiche – they always were, but only just.

But the new songs, from

Wayne gets
relaxed and
subtle

Swordfish/trombones and Rain-Dogs, see him step out of his house on the borderland and into a country of the impressively legendary: to use that lazy critical image of him to open up the luridly lit underworld end ashtray heart of white imagery, that prismatic (a drunk's word if ever there was one) blurred view of the barrios and the black ghettos as the outposts of dangerous fantasy.

This was an extraordinary theatre and a blues musical, not of the black tradition, but cousin to it, as all the best of white American work has always been: and yours and my sleaze-pit dreams were its setting and its subject.

"I don't really feel a sense of duty, I'm not in the army." Tom Waits to Gavin Martin, autumn '85.

Mark Sinker

AKIMBO

Lancaster St Martin's College

ST MARTIN'S is an Anglican teacher training college in a small northern town. Not the kind of place you'd expect to come across a performance of almost evangelical inspiration. But that's what Akimbo offer.

Their line-up is out of Yazoo but pre-dates them and is somewhat simpler. Deb, Bora sings and Andy Wilson supports on a small, tinkly, electric piano and drums simultaneously! Their material is mostly self-written in a gospel-blues tradition but laced with elements of English music hall and traditional African. The lyrics, though, are very contemporary and tackle sexism and, particularly, racism – head on. An arrangement of Hughes' "A Dream Deferred" early on made it pretty clear where Deb, Bora was coming from. She's a black American who's lived in England for some time so she's seen both styles of racism, discrete and overt. Clearly it has hurt, frustrated and angered her. But she's taken all that pain and channelled it directly into her singing.

And, despite a few diversions, including a charming instrumental with sanza and shaker, the focus of Akimbo is Deb, Bora's voice, itself inseparable from her whole personality. Her style may be storefront gospel but there is nothing remotely clichéd or posturing about it.



Tom and the gimlet-eyed sober look



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When she chose "Many Rivers To Cross" as an impromptu second encore and came to "I merely survive because of my pride" you knew you were getting body and soul, literally. I have rarely been so moved by a vocal performance. I'd guess it's the nearest I'll come to hearing Bessie Smith in person. And if you think that's a mile off, catch their next gig and judge for yourself.

Steve Lewis

**BOBBY MCFERRIN &
THE VOCAL SUMMIT**
London Logan Hall

BEFORE ANYTHING else, let's insist, he's very entertaining. His speed of reaction-time in cartoon mimicry slips under your guard every time. He is not a bore.

But is he any good? I mean, astounding technique and pure consumer pleasure apart, is he any good? The key to Bobby McFerrin, both ways, is dissolution of self. It isn't just that his mimetic flights seem to cost him nothing — he doesn't sweat — but when he's faking a face, he seems to disappear behind it completely. As if his body makes the noises through him, and his Beyerdynamic mike picks up every percussive grunt or squeak. It's so good that he doesn't need to sing into it — and the absence of this gesture of electronic intimacy that goes back to Billie Holiday is distancing as well as liberating.

His fault, if that's what it is, is that he has no voice. He's his own Emulator. Embedded in the collective sound of the Vocal Summit, which is three voices swooping and scraping their hearts out, all his bodily contortions can't make his music humanly personal. And hasn't jazz to date been the rigorous working out of lung and lip and finger and brain with or against history and the mannerisms of those around you? The working out of tensions in the multiple presence of what Channel 4 quantify term Individual Voices? Is he failing to accede to this? Or is he onto something else altogether?

McFerrin is a prodigy: he hasn't yet begun to work out the implications of his gift. Maybe he'll never be forced to. Urszula Dudziak, Jey Clayton and Norma Winstone are all passing fine singers, but they seem very meek in his presence. As if he was a kid with a dangerous toy, and they aren't sure they want him to learn all its power, which is kept in check in their own cases by their own human limits of technique. What would he do if he was forced to an edge? Probably smile modestly and back away. He doesn't have a touch of arrogance. He has something more unnerving about him, this possibility of a total effacement of personality, of replacing his face with a mirror. He's his own ventriloquist: he's his own dummy.

The lazy eclecticism that vocal quartets can fall into (the "Swingin' from Stevie Wonder to Stockhausen" syndrome) they were easily wise enough to avoid — apart from odd flung phrases, it was strictly improvised noise, Dudziak's improbable basso, Clayton's raking chatter, Winstone's forlorn abstraction . . . and the human synthesizer. It was excellent fun.

But considering what he could do, perhaps I'd like to be assaulted next time. Maybe he's just too nice a guy.

Mark Sinker



Bobby McFerrin wonders where his voice went



Above: Three faces from the GLC

Black Music Festival a wild weekend in

September (L to R) Stanley Clarke,

Philip Bailey, Ronnie Laws



In the Sixties, **NATHAN DAVIS** toured with Art Blakey, played in Eric Dolphy's last group, and recorded with people like Kenny Clarke, Hampton Hawes and Woody Shaw — but his LPs have either been out of print for years or were never released in the first place!

GRAHAM LOCK meets the man with the jinxed recording history who's about to make his name the second time around with the Paris Reunion Band.

THE MAN WHO NEVER WASN'T

NA shelf, deep in the vaults of Fantasy Records, sits the master tape to one of the great "lost" records of jazz.

"Everywhere we'd go people would say, This is the best Jazz Messengers we've heard! Let me tell you the band: there was Freddie Hubbard on trumpet, me tenor, Jeki Byard piano, Reggie Workman bass, Buhaina, of course, and because of the way Jeki would play, and Reggie'd go, it was like a semi-freedom kind of thing — with Messengers heads, you know, but when we

got to soloing... And Blakey was ridin' and floatin' the time — it was like when I was with Eric Dolphy! I remember we'd play, and Blakey'd say, wait a minute, where is it? ... but he would always be loose enough to follow, to keep it going. He's one helluva musician."

He laughs at the memory. A tall, formidably muscular man; yet softly-spoken, a friendly dameenour.

When was this? I ask.

"Nineteen sixty-five. I took Wayne Shorter's place right when Wayne went in with Miles. I

were the next guy – just for the European tour. "1

Then comes the revelation.

"We recorded a live LP on that tour."

What?

"Yeah, but there was a fight between Blakey and Prestige and it never came out."2

Had that record appeared it's likely that today Nathan Davis would be as eminent a name as his tenor predecessor rather than the silent Messenger, one of the most gifted, exciting and little-heard reedsmen in modern jazz. A whole generation of fans have missed out on him simply because his work is so hard to find. His luck with recordings has been extraordinarily cruel: his LP with the Messengers was never released, his work with Eric Dolphy – including a French radio broadcast of Dolphy's last music – has never appeared on vinyl, and his own albums from the Sixties – with a star-studded array of musicians like Kenny Clarke, Hampton Hawes, Carmell Jones, Woody Shaw and Mai Weldon – were nearly all on small European labels and have long since been deleted. A substantial body of modern music has relapsed into silence: as far as the record industry is concerned, Nathan Davis might be *The Man Who Never Was*.

The truth, of course, is something else.

Born in Kansas City in 1937, he began playing trombone but soon switched to reeds and is now a virtuoso performer on tenor, soprano and alto saxophones, bass clarinet and flute. He played with Jay McShann, briefly became one of the few men to play in Ernestine Davis's (usually) all-women International Sweethearts Of Rhythm, then led his own group with Carmell Jones before the US Army sent him to Berlin in 1960. When he left the service, he tried his luck in Europe as a freelance reedsman and his big break came in 1963 when Kenny Clarke invited him to Paris.

Though he stayed with the great bebop drummer for most of the next six years ("I mean, if you're working with Kenny Clarke, why go anywhere?"), in 1964 Davis took time out to play for a few weeks at the Chat Qui Peche Club with trumpeter Donald Byrd and revolutionary reedsman Eric Dolphy. It proved a brief, but crucial, encounter.

"It was a liberating point for me," he avers, "kind of straight ahead but freedom too. Eric taught me to play multiple sounds – three notes at a time, the thing Trane was doing – and Donald would split two notes, so we could get big chords with the three horns!"

The music must have been right on the edge then – Dolphy, Coleman and Coltrane experimenting with the very blueprints?

"Yeah," agrees Davis, "it was a very exciting time. We rehearsed every day with that band, two to three hours . . . I remember the first rehearsal, we played some tunes from *Out To Lunch* and I wanted to take a solo. Now I was used to playing with Klook and having chords, but I looked at the page and there were no chords. So I said, how am I supposed to solo? Eric said, well, you just solo linearly, off the lines. Hear where the lines go, and there you go."

"So I started to do that, but then we had some other tunes – 'Jitterbug Waltz' was one – where Eric had written out some special chords; he would have augmented elevenths, flat thirteenths and endings. So I'd start soloing and I'd figure, well, you know, Eric Dolphy, this shit is mostly free . . . so I'd just play E-flat or something. I wouldn't worry about the flat thirteenths. And every time Eric would say, you're doing it OK Net, but you're missing the thirteenths. I'd say, you hear that? He'd say,

oh yeah, and here's where you did it – and he'd play it back to me! He was a very thorough musician."

The Chat Qui Peche group – Davis, Dolphy, Byrd, bassist Luigi Tristano, drummer Jacques Toto – recorded several tunes for the French radio station ORTF which, says Davis, comprised some of the best music Dolphy ever played.³ Sadly, it was also his last. Just days later Eric Dolphy died in a diabetic coma while on a trip to Berlin.

Davis stayed on at the Chat Qui Peche for a while: he helped bring trumpeter Woody Shaw over to Europe, so fulfilling one of Dolphy's last wishes, and Shaw's Newark buddies Larry Young and Bill Brooks soon followed; this was the line-up – plus bassist Jimmy Woode – which played on Davis's debut LP, *Happy Girl*, on the German Saba label. Later, Davis rejoined Kenny Clarke, and recorded further albums, mostly on small independent labels: early titles like *Happy Girl and Hop Walk* (w/Kenny Clarke, Carmell Jones, Francy Boland, Jimmy Woode) are first-rate hard-bop-plus-balls-out sets, while 1967's *Rules Of Freedom* (w/Hamilton Hawes, Jimmy Garrison, Art Taylor) is Davis's freest outing, a homage to Coltrane, and 1969's *Live At Schola Cantorum* (w/Mal Waldron, Jimmy Woode, Art Taylor) catches the mature musician in full-flight. These records show Davis working out his personnel niche on the borders of hard bop and freeform; his traditional leanings loosened up by Coltrane and Dolphy into a rhythmic flexibility which he uses with derring. And his bellads – "While Children Sleep", "Love Is Freedom", "With This My Love" – have an eloquence, a sureness of touch, which mark Davis master of a rare lyricism.

Back in Paris, Davis was becoming increasingly involved in composing and teaching; he wrote film scores, worked as an arranger, and set up the Jazz Studies Programme at the Paris American Academy. He was, he says, very happy in Europe; he was making a decent living and had started a family – which is why he'd turned down Art Blakey's offer to return to the States with the Messengers as their musical director in 1965.

"My daughter was born . . . she was three months old then, and I said I would never go away and leave . . . you know, a lot of the guys go around making little babies all over the place, but I said I'm never gonna do that, I'm gonna stick with my kids."

Then in 1969 Davis was invited to teach jazz at Pittsburgh University and he – plus the family – decided to give it a try. He intended to stay for about three years, but they treated him so well he's still there, as Associate Professor of Music and distinguished academic author of a music textbook, *Flute Improvisation*, and a basic history of jazz, *Writings In Jazz*, now in its third edition. He even made a few more records: two, *Maketeke* (1970) and *Sixth Sense Of The 11th House* (1972), for the Pittsburgh label Segue, are no longer available; three more on his own Tomorrow International label – *A Tribute To Dr Martin Luther King Jr* (1976), *If* (1976) and *Faces Of Love* (1982) – have never been distributed outside the United States. Of these, *Sixth Sense* is his masterpiece, notably for his wonderful bass clarinet version of "The Sunshine Of Your Smile" and a superb tenor elegy on "Tribute To Malcolm". The later LPs are more eclectic, featuring guests like Japanese trumpeter Hino Terumasa and Ghanaian percussionist Willy Amoako, end mixing straight jazz with funky dance tunes, Latin rhythms and a couple of soulful vocals.

The results are a bit patchy, but a track like 'A Thought For Cannon' – his Adderley tribute – shows Davis is still one of the finest balladeers in jazz, ranking with contemporary giants like Chico Freeman and David Murray.

Davis's most recent project is the Paris Reunion Band, a group of ex-expatriates – including Woody Shaw, Jimmy Woode and Billy Brooks – whose fiery, hard-boppin' set was acclaimed the highlight of last July's Pendley Festival. The band's first LP is due from Sonet later this year, and Davis is hopeful they'll continue to play together on a regular basis. He also leads his own small group (currently a sextet) and they've just recorded an album in Belgium. But what chance is there of them playing in Britain?

"I'd like to," he says. "Personally, if I wasn't teaching at the university, I'd probably come back and stay in Europe. I think you find that people here don't really look to see if you're a big name, they take you for what you are. In the States, the cats who have big names do alright, but the cats that don't really can't make a comfortable living from playing."

That Nathan Davis is not a big name is due to the vagueness of a record industry which has kept his illustrious history out of the catalogue for far too long. Now, with the Paris Reunion Band LP imminent and Black Lion reportedly keen to reissue some of his earlier records, he's in line to receive the recognition his talents merit.

I'm sure it will only take a fair hearing to transform jazz's most invisible asset back into the men who really never *wasn't* ♦

NOTES

1. I think Nathan's memory is a bit dodgy here. Wayne Shorter left the Messengers about September 1964 and was replaced by John Gilmore, who toured Japan with the band and recorded the '5 Make It LP with them for Limelight in November 1964. Presumably, it was Gilmore whom Nathan replaced, not Shorter.

2. These tapes still exist and are in the possession of Jacques Deva, the French pianist who produced the sessions. Nathan told me that Donald Byrd had persuaded firstly Blue Note, then Columbia, to try and obtain the tapes, but on each occasion Deva had apparently refused to release the Dolphy tape unless the record company agreed to issue several of his own tapes too. What a stinker!

(I'd like to thank Billboard's Mike Hennessey and The Wire's Jen Diakow for their help in compiling this article.)



"See ya, man
– I'm gonna

read The Wire!"

GOOD FRIENDS GONE

Some of this year's losses remembered.



ANNETTE HANSHAW



PIANO RED (WILLIE PERRYMAN)



PHILLY JOE JONES 1925-1985



ZOOT SIMS 1925-1985



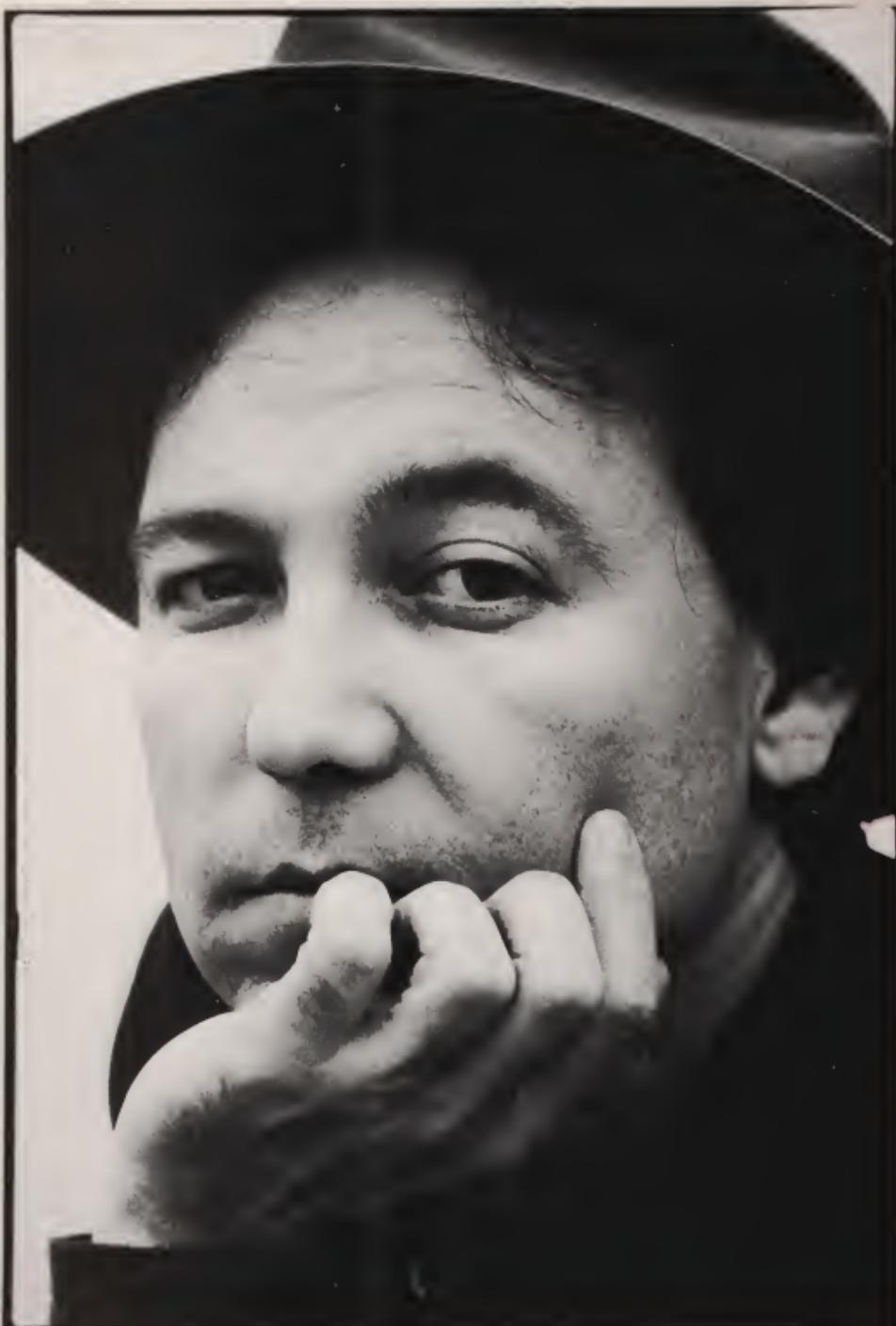
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R U B E N B L A D E S :

THE CUTTING EDGE

SUE STEWARD meets the Panamanian national hero whose music takes the pulsebeat of his people — in between his law studies.

WHEN LATIN NY magazine ran an open debate on whether salsa's male stars should keep or shed their facial hair, whiskers won. Of course. Salsa men take their stereotypes very seriously. As a passionate fan and advocate of the music, I'm not about to turn evidence here, but I can't deny that the salsa star — and the music he (for it almost always is a he) makes — is macho, conservative, and conformist. It is almost fiercely self-contained and nationalistic.

Friends in New York used to complain that salsa was becoming fossilized, was losing the attention of young Latin Americans who were increasingly drawn to the music of their Afro-American neighbours: salsa was for the older crowd and young couples, sentimental and nostalgic and populated by unchanging faces and music. Rocking the boat is generally discouraged, but of course, every generation creates someone who does not conform. It is precisely those boatrockers who have the chance to take their music, and their audience, across the big divide into the mainstream crossover (white) market. Sometimes, as in the case of Ray Barrelo and Joe Cube with their early 80s hits ("El Watusi" and "Bang Bang" respectively) the result is

everyone is happy, because the music still bears all the trade marks of the culture which produced it, and is not seen as critical or a desertion.

In the last few years, one man has emerged who has created more ripples and ructions in the salsa universe than anyone before him: a 37-year-old Panamanian, singer, songwriter, fiction writer, journalist (for a Panamanian daily, on arts and politics), feuilletonist, film star and Attorney-at-Law: Ruben Blades.

Blades' position today is the most contentious in the industry, and no-one seems to be without an impassioned opinion about him — one way or the other.

Last year the release of his first album *Buscando America*, with the sextet Sels del Solar (six from the tenements), brought him massive media attention from those areas of the press which barely ever acknowledge the rich, sophisticated music which surrounds them in New York City. It went beyond that town into national coverage, with articles in *Rolling Stone*, *People's Daily*, and *Time*. The liberal pages of *Village Voice* and *Soho News* have their ears to the salsa ground, for the artists and music which approximate their sense of culture and artistic merit (ie not the majority of Latin music) and they covered him seriously and sensibly. To clinch the situation,

Blades took the lead role in the film *Crossover Dreams* — about a young salsa singer trying to make the switch into the 'other' market, and ending up lonely and unloved on each side. Not a great movie, I'm told, but quite a cautionary tale for the man in the part, who does not appear to enter into anything without having written or studied the small print and consequences first. All part of his master plan...

There are many theories around Ruben Blades' changed fortunes and fantastic success over the past year. Why does a Latin artist who can sell 150,000 albums in Venezuela alone (and an estimated 300,000 plus in all of Central and Southern and North America), who has a perfectly solid career, need or want to cross into a white market which basically doesn't give a hoot about him and does its best to pretend that he and his kind don't exist? Well, of course, money has something to do with it: salsa stars are not fabulously rich, not even as rich as jazz stars.

Part of it must be in his case a head to redress the state of affairs, where the population group with the biggest number in NYC is the least visible, the least respected and the least represented. When Willie Colon played Reagan's inaugural ball last year, there was proof that the government realized had to acknowledge the Hispanic electorate, while grossly neglecting it at the same time. Market research in the States has just revealed that Latinos buy more beer and records than white or black Americans, and quick to respond, beer ads now feature Hispanics. "But we're still members of the underground," comments Blades, bitterly. You notice that though they are clearly Hispanics, the models in these ads are light-skinned and glamorous in an Anglo-American style (just as with black models).

IT'S CERTAINLY no coincidence that both Ray Barreto and Ruben Blades, the two Latinos whose music has been accepted into the white fold, are noticeably whiter than many salsa artists. And both speak perfect English. It's unnecessary to point out the attraction to the industry of both features in an artist being groomed for international success, which is Blades' current fate. The story goes that when Ruben was pictured on the cover of *Latin NY*, sales skyrocketed that week, presumably because of the non-Latin browsers drawn by his 'good-looking' Anglo face. A multi-national company ain't gonna choose an Afro-Hispanic to feed to the world market to exploit a whole new culture's music. Ruben Blades is fully aware of these processes, and of the delicacy of his position. I'd guess he'll go so far with the marketing and the tricks of the company machinery.

The problem for WEA's execs is not that Blades speaks English, or sings in Spanish. It's what he says.

Ruben is primarily acknowledged — loved or loathed — for his lyrics. They forced him into wearing a bulletproof vest for a while last year, and they led to a campaign against him and his music in Florida, which culminated in the banning of his music from the radio there. "If you speak to a Miami Cuban," he says, furiously, "they'll tell you I'm a Communist." And he's careful to deny any party affiliation — instead stating his position as "outside — so I can criticize effectively" and as occupying "a centre, a centre compromised with truth, leaning towards the left — yes, well, where else are you going to lean? — but it's a centre that tries to deal objectively".

There are many rumours and quotes about his ambition to be President of Panama by the time he's 40. I asked him directly about that, and he said it was a misquote. All the same,

stranger things have happened in white houses. And in the Dominican Republic, that Island's greatest merengue star and idol Johnny Ventura is also Senator Ventura. And as Ruben sat in the All-American diner, picking the pits out of his tomato slices (a childhood suspicion), analysing his career in the context of both North and Latin American music; his finger crooked, points enumerated in every sentence, the logic and rationale carefully, calmly unfolding. I saw no reason at all why this man with the magnetic brown eyes and soft-spoken voice, should not become President — or any other thing he wanted. His friends affectionately refer to these monologues as the Ruben Blades one-man show. I felt vaguely redundant.

LET'S GO back to the beginning. Unlike any other artist on the salsa scene in New York, Ruben Blades is not Puerto Rican or Cuban, but Panamanian. The key figures in his life were father and mother, both musicians who seem to have been away a lot, leaving him and his six brothers and sisters with their grandmother. This woman is a legend, mentioned in every bog of Ruben — a vegetarian, yoga, rosicrucian, who sent her girls to school in favour of the boys because of their disadvantaged position in society, and who instilled in Ruben what he describes as "his desire for a sense of justice". That goes some way to explaining why he studied law.

His class background is hard to establish; he sometimes gives an impression of being a ghettoised, but his family's education and attitudes don't coincide. Musically his career began with doowop and rock n' roll, like every other kid anywhere in the world in the 60s. ("Buscando Amor" launches with an ironic doowop reference before plunging headlong into a salsa delicacy.) At that time, America was a source of film, music, entertainment and envy. And then came student riots in '64, when the US Marines marched in and shot up his campus, killing two and injuring over 500 people. From that day on, he didn't sing in English again (and even though he said last year that this album would feature some English lyrics, it hasn't, though his last two albums provide English translations).

His politics gelled from then on, and like Giberto Gil and Caetano Veloso further across the continent in Brazil, he pursued his ideals and politics into popular song lyrics. He arrived in New York in 1970, and the closest he could come to a "break" into music was a job as mailroom clerk in Fania Records, powerhouse of salsa. Mailrooms are always good for gossip and news of jobs before they go public. In this way he heard that Ray Barreto needed a vocalist in a hurry, auditioned for the job, and was singing in Madison Square Gardens — to 20,000 people — within weeks.

In '74, he appeared on Ray's album, *Barreto*, but his own material would have to wait until he teamed up with another Fania artist, Willie Colon, who already had a tremendous reputation as trombonist, arranger and bandleader since his late teens. These two seemed to be made for each other, and were soulmates and partners on some of the most effective and popular albums in the 70s. Their fertile partnership lasted until 1982, since which both have new bands, contracts with multinational companies (RCA and WEA) and a couple of albums apiece. Their first record together, *Melendo Mano* (1977), featured a song which had taken him three years to record. No-one until Willie Colon would touch it. "Pablo Pueblo", still one of his most popular songs, is a story of Latin Everyman, a vignette of Pablo's life, and

therefore of the life of millions of other urban, poor Hispanics. In a lyrical tone, he paraphrased the words for me:

... "The man that comes home from work in a factory walks into the same neighbourhood with the same old half-torn, political advertisements with half-smiling faces, promising new tomorrows; he goes into the same reality of the neighbourhood, same dog-peeing on the corner, same music coming out of the jukebox in the same bar where he goes to drown his sorrows on Saturdays and Sundays, to his room where he sees his wife and the children sleeping in the same bed where he's gonna crawl into. And he thinks, how long is this gonna crawl into...

To a non-Spanish speaker that song, with its catchy, danceable tune, with the soft clear voice riding between Willie Colon's sweet trombone and softened horns, could just as easily be about love, romance and dancing — the perennial themes of salsa which Blades and Colon were turning their backs on for the first time. Its mournful quality, underlying that vigorous instrumentation, is enhanced by Willie Colon's arrangements — which all through their partnership breathed extra meaning into Ruben's lyrics. This and the following record, *Sientrás*, was the beginning of what has been described as "The Dawn of the Salsa Renaissance".

Blades' idea is to turn songs into vignettes, comments on lifestyles, life conditions: "Plástico", like Poly Styrene's "Artificial" was an assault on the plastic life, plastic relationship, the superficiality imposed on our lives; "Pedro Navaja" introduced a character who reappears in Ruben's songs like an old enemy — in his latest album, released last month, Pedro turns up in "Sorpresas" (surprises), a story about a thief robbing a drunkard and being killed by a ghostly character — who turns out to be Pedro Navaja — "with a previous bullet wound in him, took both knives (from the body); he always carried two when he went to 'work' . . .")

THE FLAK started flying with "Pablo Pueblo": criticisms that the song was too long for radio play (proven to be rubbish), containing too many complex words for the illiterate Spanish audience, too undanceable, and too damn depressing.

"They were saying this song's too depressing," Ruben remembers, wryly. "Which is absurd. They said people want songs to forget, which is absurd — we cannot exercise time in forgetting, but in remembering and fixing; at this point, we are so close to destruction, that every single possible social and cultural instrument we have to create awareness . . . it's an emergency situation . . . anyway," he tailed off, "it was very difficult. And still is."

But Ruben Blades is tenacious. Those records sold in hundreds of thousands, kept Fania afloat for years, and made Ruben and Willie stars throughout the Spanish-speaking world. I gradually realized during our conversation that New York is not the only focus for Latin Music: "Latin American countries are like different rooms in the same house," he once said. The house is, presumably, owned by Washington, but still contains music of different accents and flavours in each room. He had stressed from the outset that one of the reasons for his unpopularity in certain salsa quarters is that "First of all, you have to remember I'm a Panamanian. A Latin American, and I'm invading areas that have been occupied by American Latinos — descendants of Latin Americans — for a while.

"And Latin Americans do not have a direct

contact for information about what is truly Latin America's reality. The music has been undergoing radical transformation due to radical transformation in politics. Popular philosophies are being applied to music that although not radical in content does present a

in the face of tradition and discarded the horns) now bring them back in the shape of synthesizers, broken into two sections by a watery, funk piano solo, not as light end fetchingly as an Irakere idea, but clearly under the same influence.



Ruben Y Los Seis del Solar

form of rebellion, of acknowledgement, of certain asphyxiating aspects of Latin American life. People like myself – and I am not the only one – started writing songs that went a little bit beyond the mere understated rebellious happy song . . . we started confronting issues that were more refined."

Songs like "Pedro Navaja", "Pablo Pueblo" and the extraordinarily powerful "GOBD" off last year's *Buscando America* have far more in common with the modern realist Latin American authors – particularly Gabriel García Márquez – than the traditions of Cuban songwriting. Márquez is, in fact, a regular correspondent with Ruben Blades, and the latter is supposedly putting some of his poems to music. "I would like to have the simplicity of a guy like Márquez end the honesty of a man like Camus," he said.

THE CURRENT album, released last month, is called *Escenas – Scenes* . . . a suitably doubletake title.

The same themes are present, the same depressing scenarios – in *Heart Dues* – "Cuentas del Alma" – a mother and her son, locked inside her tragic life – "Mother always tried to fall asleep in front of the television set; she always asked me not to turn it off; she could not stand her loneliness in that house, though she never confessed it . . .", "I grew up watching mother clinging to a hope (never explained) that burned her, all bitter, in an endless night . . ." This is another song which foils the critics who say his music is too serious. The band (a light six-piece who flew

Last year, during our conversation, as Ruben was beginning rehearsals for this recording, he was full of excitement about these songs. He promised covers of the Beatles' "Baby's in Black" were evidently recorded, but haven't appeared, here at least. Instead, this album is further into the electronic field – not electro, certainly, but it is heavily drenched with synthesizers. Joe Jackson's contribution doesn't stand out above the rest of the band, but the synths are used appropriately and cunningly in most places. Occasionally the "sweet" button is over-used.

The surprise of the album – and certainly its selling point in the US – is the duet between Ruben and Linda Ronstadt on "Silencios". Last year he told me about this song, written to be sung as a duet, with as yet unnamed woman. It's another familiarly depressing tale of love: a bittersweet territory of a couple who "like each other, but there's no love", who are lonely but together, "prolonging the end" . . . a radical departure from the salsa and the track that will most certainly have brought him most criticism from some quarters. But it's another example of his skill at documenting the faultlines in people's relationships. It's basically a rock ballad, soft and gentle with long notes and sparkling details, sighs and stretched voices, deep echoed bass drum synths; it won't last, it hasn't got classic quality and it's his most extreme move yet.

But he's out in the waters of international pop now, and as he explained, "I'm breaking away from dancing scheme structures by

saying this music is not just for dancing. I'm going to make music that is a commentary, utilizing any pattern, any rhythm, any construction that I want. Forget dancing as the only way, but I'm not advocating the disappearance of dance music – we always want to dance – I'm only saying that we must also consider other needs."

I'VE LEFT to last one of my favourites of this new batch of songs, awaited for over a year now. "Caina" (Cocaine) is Ruben the moral guardian, the man who is surrounded in the salso world with drug tragedies and hopeless cases, who comes from a country – a continent – whose economy is buttressed by cocaine – and he's put himself on the line with this cautionary tale.

Starting with a false start, "I get no kick from cocaine . . ." – then silence, the twirl of a piano, a surge of a lush synthesized chord, and it's off into relentless classic salsa guaguanco. Ironically this track, maybe above all others, would go down the best in some of the Manhattan salsa clubs where the women's rooms resound to the sniffs and snorts of customers who do get their kicks from cocaine . . .

Of course, Ruben Blades with his sharp analysis and his understanding of oppression, knows why that is. "I try to get the point across utilizing both popular and more sophisticated tools without falling into this trap of intellectualism where I would think I was above anybody else."

Turning back to some of his narrative songs – and it is impossible with Ruben Blades not to return again and again to the lyrics – I asked him about the gap between the illiterate people of Latin America and the intellectuals who espouse him in the States (and Europe); and how he manages to write songs to span each audience. He chuckled slightly, and as if he had been waiting to say this private revelation told me that he considers himself a short story writer. "On the strength of sales of this album, and because I have the short story 'GOBD' in it, I consider myself to be the best-selling short story writer in Latin America this year."

He ended our conversation by announcing his next character, to be played by himself – Panameño Blades, who will work with The Gamboa Road Gang – "Named after a section of the Canal Zone where there was a Penitentiary. It's also the title of a very famous Panamanian novel about the inmates. They used to work on these roads that would lead some place that they weren't gonna go to. I found that this is pretty much what we've been doing in Latin America all this time – building roads for others to follow. Now it's our own chance to make our own roads and follow them. It's going to be a lot of fun."

And after paying the bill, he slipped back into the library, to continue his Law Masters studies. That Gamboa Road is going to take him far. ■

DISCOGRAPHY:

Barreto Ray Barreto featuring Ruben Blades (Fania)
The Good The Bad The Ugly Willie Colon, Hector Lavoe and Ruben Blades (Fania)
Meliendo Meno Willie Colon and Ruben Blades (Fania)
Siembra Willie Colon and Ruben Blades (Fania)
Meesra Vida Parts I and II Ruben Blades (Fania)
Buscando America Ruben Blades and Seis del Solar (WEA)
Escenas Ruben Blades and Seis del Solar with Linda Ronstadt and Joe Jackson (WEA).

BLOOD OFF THE TRACKS

So what's bothering bosscat guitarist JAMES BLOOD ULMER? Seems everybody's taking a piece of the harmolodic action except him. Here he tells STEVE LAKE why he'll do no more explaining.

"I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT THAT SHIT!" he roared. "I DON'T WANNA HEAR THOSE NAMES NO MORE! JAMAALADEEN TACUMA? HE'S GOT A RECORD CONTRACT! SHANNON JACKSON GOT A RECORD CONTRACT! I GUESS WHO AIN'T GOT A RECORD CONTRACT! HUH?" HARMOLODICS? NO! I AINT GONNA TALK ABOUT THAT EITHER! I BEEN TALKING ABOUT THAT FOR FIVE - F-I-V-E - YEARS! IT'S 1985. MAN! THE MAJOR RECORD COMPANIES KNOWS ABOUT IT! THE INDEPENDENTS KNOWS ABOUT IT! THE BUSINESS PEOPLE KNOWS ABOUT IT! THERE'S EVEN A BUNCH OF HARMOLODIC PLAYERS MAKIN' MONEY OFF OF IT!"

Lurching from one foot to the other end pawing the air with both fists; James "Blood" Ulmer looked quite convincingly dangerous. If Ornette and company were out of bounds, conversation-wise, what should we talk about, the reporter asked carefully?

"Something," "Blood" began, "something that's gonna MAKE ME PROSPEROUS!"

He fixed a bloodshot eyeball on his inquisitor. And what might that be?

"I . . . DON'T KNOW!"

Pause.

"But I tell ye this - never expect no help from record companies. They'd sooner change you than help you, that's what I've found." He shook his head. "Five years. Five years . . . whew!"

A wheezing laugh shook his big frame. Then he switched to a squeaky, lispy little voice, presumably an imitation of a neophyte paleface jazz critic.

"What about Ornette Coleman?" he minced. "What about Shannon Jackson?" THEY DON'T TALK TO ME! I DON'T TALK TO THEM! I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUCK JAMAALADEEN'S DOIN'! We don't have phonecalls. We don't have board meetings . . . HURI HURI HURI . . . to talk about the music. Everybody's just done their thing.

"You saw the people tonight, man. How many encores was it?"

Three.

"Yeah! It's like that every night. I'm just glad the people digs it. I don't wanna explain what I'm doin no more. I don't wanna categorize my shit. I'm not gonna tell 'em no more NOTHIN'." He put his guitar into its travelling case, snapping the locks with an air of finality.

THE POSTERS had advertised "PHALANX", a new band featuring "Blood", George Adams, Sirone and Rashied Ali. In the event, the rhythm section, to use that quaint term, "never even left New York". What we got was the Black Rock trio plus Adams. And the promoters, possibly fearing prosecution under the Trade Descriptions Act, tried to claim approximation with the presence of Rashied

Ali's son, Amin on bass guitar. This was good enough for me, certainly, though pockets of discontent made themselves audible.

I didn't know it, but the Adams/Ulmer association goes back 20 years. The two men toured Germany back in 1966 as part of an organ group, plying "blues things, but some bebop, too" and "learnt how to play loud", to hold their own against the all-stops-out blast of the Hammond.

The pseudo-Phalanx is an enjoyable group, although the petrification of the styles of sax player and guitarist will never let them meet as the fluid equals they must once have been. In that sense, group improvisation is a young men's game. When style becomes a trademark wares can be effectively paraded, but not much is given away.

"I've often described myself as a businessman who plays music," said George Adams affably. "It was an attitude that Mingus taught us. A survival tactic. At the same time, there's got to be a principle involved, otherwise your success is short-lived. I try and stay alert to the changes that are going on, business-wise. A couple of years ago, you could still come out as a soloist, but now all the promoters are calling for bands. People want the sort of power and consistency you get from a group. So we're cleaning up in the pieces that cater to the new wave. (Laughter.) Yeah, we're playing legitimate new wave. In Japan somebody told me I was playing punk saxophone. I said 'Call me when you want, just pay me . . .'"

Asked about his affinity with the harmolodic world, Adams stalled. "I got my own system." He laughed. "Ornette's a good friend of mine. We often talk about The Role Of The Saxophone. But I see myself as a much more Naturalistic player. When I'm on stage I'm not thinking about theory . . . I'm not thinking about business, either!"

"Naturalistic" is close enough for the slurred and moaned vocalizations of Adams' senior style, but as yet it seems like an appendix to the Ulmer Trio, who have gotten very compact in a rough, raw sort of way.

Hendrix's name is usually thrown around when the subject of Ulmer comes up but Jimi was really the more modern player with his electronic galactocentric slant on the city blues. Ulmer, for all his comparable volume, is more clawhammering *rural*. The pitch of their voices is similar, at least, though Blood's lyrics remain an indiscernible mumble. And his best-known song, "Are You Glad To Be In America?" sounds so much like Jimi's question "Have you ever been Experienced?" that I always want to respond with "Well, I have." (Refer to *Am I You Experienced?* and compare.)

But indirectly the Hendrix reference lives on in the drumming of Calvin Weston. Weston extends the style shaped and made comprehensible by Elvin Jones and which

was popularized by Mitch Mitchell. Its essence is rotary, polyrhythmic playing all round the beat. Or circles, circles, circles. A dramatic approach, and in the hands of drummers as capable as Jones, Mitchell and Weston a very vital, emotionally involving one.

WHEN "BLOOD'S" temperature had cooled a little, one could take a depth sounding of his frustrations and bafflement. He had not been a young man when the media had decided he was the new star in the firmament and his rapid propulsion from little-league Rough Tred to big-time CBS seemed to confirm it. One minute he was playing Reshied Ali's club, propelling a jam session with Frank Wright, the next (it seemed) he was headlining the Berlin Jazz Festival.

Then, just as suddenly, forces unknown were calling Time. Bump! Back to Rough Tred and then off the vinyl map altogether. The weird part was that all of this seemed unrelated to his musical progress. He'd done nothing but improve - in small increments - just as any craftsman who sticks with it long enough will.

Well (sigh) what else to do but carry on? To silence those who claim that "it all sounds the same" (there's always a chorus of those in the wings) Ulmer is trying to field three bands at once, after the manner of the (unmentionable) Jamaaladeen Tacuma. One significant difference is that all of Ulmer's bands draw upon the same reservoir of material. You'll get "Are You Glad . . .?" from Phalanx-as-advertised, from the Black Rock group and from Odyssey, the trio with Cheries Burnham on violin and Warren Benbow on drums.

There are plans afoot to use a synthesizer player into Odyssey, to make the textures more spacey - and less earthy - than those of Black Rock. Ulmer also has a female singer under wraps whom he plans to unveil at some point in one context or the other. Rumours have been heard, too, of a possible collaboration with Billy Cobham. Blood recently played opposite Cobham's Glass Managerie group in New York and was quoted by the magazine *Musician* thus: "I never realized where Shannon (Jackson) was coming from until this weekend: Billy Cobham . . . He plays good drums. I could fit right in with what he's doing."

James "Blood" Ulmer is determined, finally, to produce a record for Calvin Weston and Amin Ali, the selfless workers who provide the roving backdrop for his harmolodic blues leads. "They haven't had the credit they should have," said Ulmer.

Who's going to release their album? the journalist blundered, with a mild sensation of foot-in-the-mouth.

Ulmer's large, bearded and behattted head turned in half-profile. One eye swivelled menacingly in its socket.

A rumbling like thunder filled the room . . .



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BOOKS

BESSIE SMITH
by Elaine Feinstein,
(Penguin, £2.95)

THERE HAVE been, and will be, better studies of Bessie Smith. The interest in Elaine Feinstein's account – part of Penguin's new series *Lives of Modern Women* – is in the singer's impact on the imagination of a distinguished novelist.

This is a feminist's biography, though by no means a doctrinaire one. Feinstein sees in Bessie the fullest possible assertion of female sexuality (including bisexuality), a directness about sex that would leave most men standing, and a physical presence not far short of awesome.

Indeed, Bessie's size and strength and willingness to throw her weight around become an almost obsessive refrain at every stage of the story. Feinstein takes the singer's nickname – 'Empress of the Blues' – virtually literally. Bessie emerges as a version of Catherine the Great; when her husband is found to be messing around with a show-girl, Bessie, 'like an empress of old' throws out the messenger who shops the story and goes after Jack with a gun.

There is a slight worry at the back of all this. Feinstein constantly contrasts Bessie's luxuriant bulk and physical power with her own (and in her own words) skinny white frame. There rests a suspicion throughout the book that Bessie is being used, once again, as another archetype in the white mythology of black instinctualism. This tends to bury a more interesting point, that the blues is essentially a female form, emerging from an experience that is not wholly defined by colour of skin but by a far deeper and more profound physical divide, that of gender.

Bessie is presented in the opening chapter as one of the great latter-day sinners. 'Her lonely voice opposes a stubborn pride to the ordinary injustice of men... She isn't trying to please anyone. The habit of submission, of letting yourself be used, comes too easily to women. In Bessie's voice is a full-hearted rejection of any such foolishness.' It's a pity that this important recognition – one easily confirmed by a half-hour with 'Empty Bed Blues', which no one could mistake for an ordinary come-on song – should get lost in a rather perfunctory narrative of woundings, punchings-out and quasi-lesbian relationships.

Feinstein, for all her love of the songs, isn't good on Bessie's music, nor on the problems of the black artist in America. The story is somehow scamped, as thin as its subject was ample for a longer and more enterprising treatment. (Perhaps the unforgiving 100-page format gave too little scope.)

In death, Bessie pined all those artists – Plath, Hemingway, Byron, Lorca – who have been remembered and argued over almost as

much for their end as for their work. Bessie's death – and Edward Albee's play *The Death of Bessie Smith* – stands as a symbol of the 'ordinary injustice' of America. No conspiracy, no intent, just the second-nature failings of humanity. What is sad about Feinstein's book is that Bessie's own human feelings should so insistently get in the path of the music.

Brian Morton

■ BEATS OF THE HEART: POPULAR MUSIC OF THE WORLD
by Jeremy Marre and
Hannah Charlton
(Pluto Press in
association with Channel 4, £6.95 pbk)

THE SERIES of programmes this book accompanies have been exemplary in their sensitivity to the crosscurrents and contradictions of popular music in thirteen very different situations. The book suffers, at

least in part, from many of the faults the films so carefully avoided, and misses out on the extra perspective time and recollection might have allowed. It's filled with anecdote and sympathetic portrait, but nothing the films hadn't already achieved, and Marre's own feintly judgmental opinions flatten out some of the depths of understanding that had been achieved by using multiple commentaries.

There are a couple of strange mistakes that look like carelessness (putting something together too fast, for topical publication?); Ry Cooder's LP with Fleco Jimenez was called *Chicken Skin Music* (not *Chicken Shack*), and while Asha Bhosle is certainly a rival to Lata Mangeshkar for the first ladyship of Indian Playback singing, she isn't actually her sister (Marre is presumably confusing her with Lata's sister Usha). Of course it's too much to expect Marre to be as impressive a writer as he is a director, but the conclusion has to be that the book misses chances, and ends up superior coffee-table, interesting and intriguing even, without being ultimately satisfactorily challenging.

Mark Sinker



Bessie in St Louis Blues

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

MAX HARRISON dusts off his bagpipes
and looks forward to another month of
new music.

THE MAIN December event in contemporary classical music is the 60th birthday of Luciano Berio, the man who gave you "I Tnori del Petrarca: per la Dolce Memoria di Quel Giorno", "Points on a Curve to Find" and so much else. Actually, this took place on October 24th, but the London concert marking the occasion occurs at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on December 12th at 7.45pm, when the Italian composer directs the London Sinfonietta, Sinfonietta Voices and diverse soloists in his "Voc", "Folk Songs", "Corale" and the British première of "Requies".

Three other Sinfonietta December events should also be mentioned here. On the 15th at 7.30pm at the EMI Studio 1, Abbey Road, NW8, Oliver Knussen will conduct an open rehearsal under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of New Music. This is one of an invaluable series of events that enable us to become acquainted with the music of new composers – and for the composers themselves, indeed, to hear their works performed. This one is scheduled to include the world premières of Nicholas Herberd's "Ching Chueh", settings of third-century Chinese poems, and David Sawyer's "Relief". Then at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square SW1, on December 28th at 8pm and continuing until January 25th, Opera Factory combine, fuse or unite with the London Sinfonietta for "Hell's Angels". This has music by Nigel Osborne, a text by David Freeman, and Diego Masson conducts.

Ahead of all this, however, at the Music Box of the Festival Hall on December 1st, is something called "Response". This has Oliver Knussen introducing an afternoon of his own music, and conducting Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht", Robin Holloway's "Fantasy Pieces on the Heine Liederkreis of Schumann", and other things. There is also a concert titled "Off Centre", featuring composers outside the main stream of 20th-century music.

Turning to miscellaneous events, the Electro-Acoustic Music Association of Great Britain's concert at The Place, 17 Duke's Road WC1 at 8pm on December 2nd should be noted. This is the second in their Composer's Choice series, and Jonny Harrison (no relation) will introduce two outstanding works for electronic tape. Harrison himself was a first prize-winner at the 1983 Bourges International Festival and is now director of the electro-acoustic studio at the Barber Institute of the Fine Arts, Birmingham University. He is currently working on a commission at IRCAM in Paris. The two works that he will introduce are Denis Smalley's "Perkes", a seminal piece in the development of electro-acoustic music in Britain, and "De Natura Sonorum" by Bernard Parmegiani, a classic tape work from the GRM studio in Paris. The loudspeakers will be thirty strong at this concert.

Rather different should be the clarinet and piano recital by Nicholas Cox and Vanessa Letarache at the British Music Information Centre, 10 Stratford Place W1 on December 9th at 7.30pm. The sole piece likely to connect stylistically with events at The Place is Jonathan Harvey's "Transformations". But

Hugh Wood's music is always worth attention and they are playing his "Paraphrase", together with Judith Weir's "Sketches from a Bagpiper's Album" and a Sonata by York Bowen. Admission is free.

At St John's, Smith Square SW1 on December 19th at 7.30pm the Lontano Ensemble's "The Americas" series reaches its penultimate concert. These programmes have presented a wide, almost wild, variety of musical endeavours, from the austere "East Coast serialists" of the USA (think of John Rockwell's All American Music, reviewed last month), to pulsating rhythmic noises from the Caribbean, from the Indian-influenced works of the Colombian Guillermo Rondon to the finely-wrought scores of Elliott Carter. On the 19th we shall hear the UK premières of Marisa Rezende's "Sexteto em Seis Tempos", Charles Wuorinen's "Speculum Specul" and Silvestre Revueltas's "First and Second Little Serious Pieces" – this last surely a charming title. To these are added Lukas Foss's familiar "Time Cycle" and two "Choros" by Villa-Lobos.

This column's first, timid venture away from London is to draw attention to a concert at Arnolfini, Narrow Quay, Bristol on December 7th at 8pm which features the Endymion Ensemble together with the composer and pianist John McCabe. The Endymion group is a combination of string quintet, wind quintet, keyboards and percussion, and was formed in

1979. Drawing an initial repertoire from the classic septets, octets and divertimentos of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Stravinsky, it now performs an increasing variety of new works commissioned from such composers as David Bedford, Giles Swayne, Nigel Osborne and Robert Saxton. The two McCabe scores included are his Concerto for Piano and Wind Orchestra, and "Lizard". This latter is one of a series of pieces written under the general title Desert in 1981 for Redlands University, California. The other items are Elliott Carter's Eight Etudes and a Fantasy, Gyorgy Ligeti's Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet, and a work as yet unnamed, for solo marimba by Richard Rodney Bennett.

At the Royal Northern College of Music, 124 Oxford Road, Manchester, on December 3rd at 7.30pm there is a piano recital by John Ogdon, no less, consisting entirely of new (or newish) music. It begins with the world première of his own "A Kaleidoscope", followed by Four Studies by Ronald Stevenson, Diversions on a Russian Air by Thomas Piffield, a Sonata by David Ellis and some more McCabe – Three Impromptus. This is in aid of the Gordon Green Memorial Scholarship, Green, lately deceased, having been a great piano teacher.

As part of the Bath Festival Winter Season, the Orchestre of St John's, Smith Square, will be in the Assembly Rooms, Bath, on December 1st at 7.30pm to play Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 2 and Maxwell Davies's Sinfonia Concertante conducted by John Lubbock. Also, Mark Lubotsky plans to solo in the Violin Concerto No. 3 by the contemporary Russian composer Alfred Schnittke.

Finally, two relevant books. In Trevor Wishart's *On Sonic Art* (Imagining Press) a wide-ranging look is taken, from the musical rather than the technical viewpoint, at new developments in music-making and musical aesthetics made possible by the advent of computers and digital information processing. *New Sounds, New Personalities* (Faber & Faber) finds twenty British composers in conversation with Paul Griffiths. Among them are Harrison Birtwistle, Maxwell Davies, Brian Ferneyhough, Alexander Goehr, Oliver Knussen and, alas, Tim Souster.



Luciano Berio

ZWERIN

...what'd I say?



EVEN UNINTERESTING people can be of interest if you are interested. I interview a stream of musicians for a living. The short sessions can be frustrating, and it's awkward to ask intimate questions of someone new. Many are cautious, having already been burned by the press. So the trick is to re-define the situation, to expand expected questions and answers into conversation like at a party all of a sudden sometimes.

Once I was one of about 20 journalists lined up to interview Stevie Wonder. "It's like a barber shop," I said finally in there. "Or a whore house," he added, bored and tired. I had interviewed Keith Jarrett a few days earlier. "Do you know what Keith Jarrett said about you?" I asked him. His face snapped suddenly towards me as though manipulated by a speedy puppeteer: "What did Keith say?" He said it's a shame you don't play more acoustic piano." Wonder smiled: "That's funny. Just the other day I thought how much I'd like to hear Keith play synthesizer." New information can re-define a situation.

With journalism's inherent time and space limitations, a few good epigrams are about the most you can hope for. Some day I'd like to assemble them into a book called 'WHAT'D I SAY?', a collection of quotations which, with reflection, could equal more than the sum of its parts. In the meantime, taking a quote out of context can be like clicking a camera shutter. The blink of an eye. Consider the following a proofsheet.

BOBBY MCFERRIN, who improvises for a living: "I try never to go to the same restaurant twice. Or if I do I always order something different. If I have an appointment in the same

place several days in a row I take different routes getting there. If I give two concerts in the same hall, I make sure to repeat absolutely nothing."

Wily 'Mink' DeVille, rock and roll cult hero: "Pop music was just terrible in the 60s. I really hated Cream and The Rolling Stones and the way they made the blues so boring. Stupid hippies playing dumb music. Everything got distorted and out of shape ... I made my first LP in the 70s, talk about your classic American success story. The kid comes through the door. Now everybody's saying, 'yeah, man, you're the greatest'. Cigar-smoking people telling you how big you're going to be, pulling out these little brown bottles; 'Here, kid, do some of this,' and cocaine's blowing your head wide open. Phoney chicks, phoney industry people, falling all over you. So I started to do junk. Right away I knew that was for me. I could hide in there ..."

Juan Merin, flamenco guitarist: "Flemenco already existed when the Moors came to Spain in 711, but they added a strong Arabic flavour. The Spanish conquest of Latin America brought African, Indian and Spanish elements together and various permutations came back to Spain and influenced flamenco. It's always been melting-pot music, so you see if I add a jazzlike dominant 9th chord, it's not breaking tradition but following it ..."

(Subsidized) Dutch jazz musician: "I'm a jazz musician but I'm only in it for the money."

Gilberto Gil, explaining his song "The Cleanest Hand": "Whites say we're dirty, that we don't tidy up a room coming in we'll dirty it going out. But our role in Western society has actually been cleaning white dirt. Whites pollute the oceans and the air – industry and

technology is all white. We blacks have had nothing to do with that, except to clean it up. You make the dirt we clean it. So our hands are the cleanest hands."

Alexander Ivarsky, Siberian jazz critic in exile in France: "In Siberia, jazz musicians work shift jobs in restaurants where they make good money but degenerate because they have to play superficial pop songs and they drink very much every night. They give about a jazz concert a month. Waiting for a bus to get to one, my hands stuck to my face it was so cold. You really appreciate the warmth of jazz when you have to fight the environment to hear it."

Dizzy Gillespie: "Jazz musicians are like the way they play. Take S. for example. There's a guy everybody thinks is nasty and yet he plays so sweet. I told his wife, 'You ought to talk to S. People are saying negative things about him.' She said to me, 'Why don't you speak up for him? You're his friend.' So I said, 'Okay, tell me something nice to say about the son of a bitch.' Hal But, you know, he can play such pretty melodies, there must be some tenderness in him somewhere."

Ray Brown, bassist: "One-nighters are only a grind if you regard them as a grind. One guy looks at an apple pie and worries about cholesterol and calories. Another guy just sees something good to eat. I look at one-nighter tour and start planning my menus. There's this restaurant in Rome ..."

B.B. King: "I think of the blues in terms of truth and simplicity. We say what we say for the people who didn't go to college. Whereas a great philosopher like Mark Twain would write an essay on the nature of love, all I know how to say is 'Baby, I love you.'"

PLAYLISTS

THE LOUNGE LIZARDS The Lounge Lizards (EG Records)

CHARLES MINGUS Presents Charles Mingus (Barnaby/Candid)

MARX ROACH QUARTET Speak, Brother, Speak! (Fantasy)

TOM WAITS Rain-Dogs (Island)

ALBERT AYLER Witches and Devils (Arista)

ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO Urban Bushmen (ECM)

ANDREW HILL Point Of Departure (Blue Note)

JOE HENDERSON Mode For Joe (Blue Note)

LESTER BOWIE All The Magic! (ECM)

MARK STEWART & THE MAFIA Learning To Cope With Cowardice (Plexus)

THELONIOUS MONK Si Club (CBS)
ELLINGTON & COLTRANE (Impulse)
CAPTAIN BEEFHEART Shiny Beast (Warners)

VARIOUS Tribute To Thelonious Monk (A & M)

DAVID BOWIE Scary Monsters (RCA)
VIVIEN STANSHALL Sir Henry At Rawlinsons End (Charisma)

SHRIEKBACK Oil And Gold (Anista)
JOY DIVISION Closer (Factory)

STAN TRACEY and **SAL NISTICO** Live In London (Steam)

SHAKESPEARE and **MARLOW**
DRAMATIC PLAYERS Tempest (Argo)

ME ROLAND SH301 plus Vox Phantom (Dodgy Cassettes)

... from David Peacock

... from Robin Tormans, Buckingham

HENRY THREADGILL SEXTET When Was That? (About Time)

MAXWELL DAVIES Symphony No. 3 (BBC Artium)

MICHAEL GARRICK TRIO Cold Mountain (Argo)

CHRIS McGREGOR Blue Notes For Mongezi (Ogun)

HUGH MASEKELA Home Is Where The Music Is (Blue Thumb)

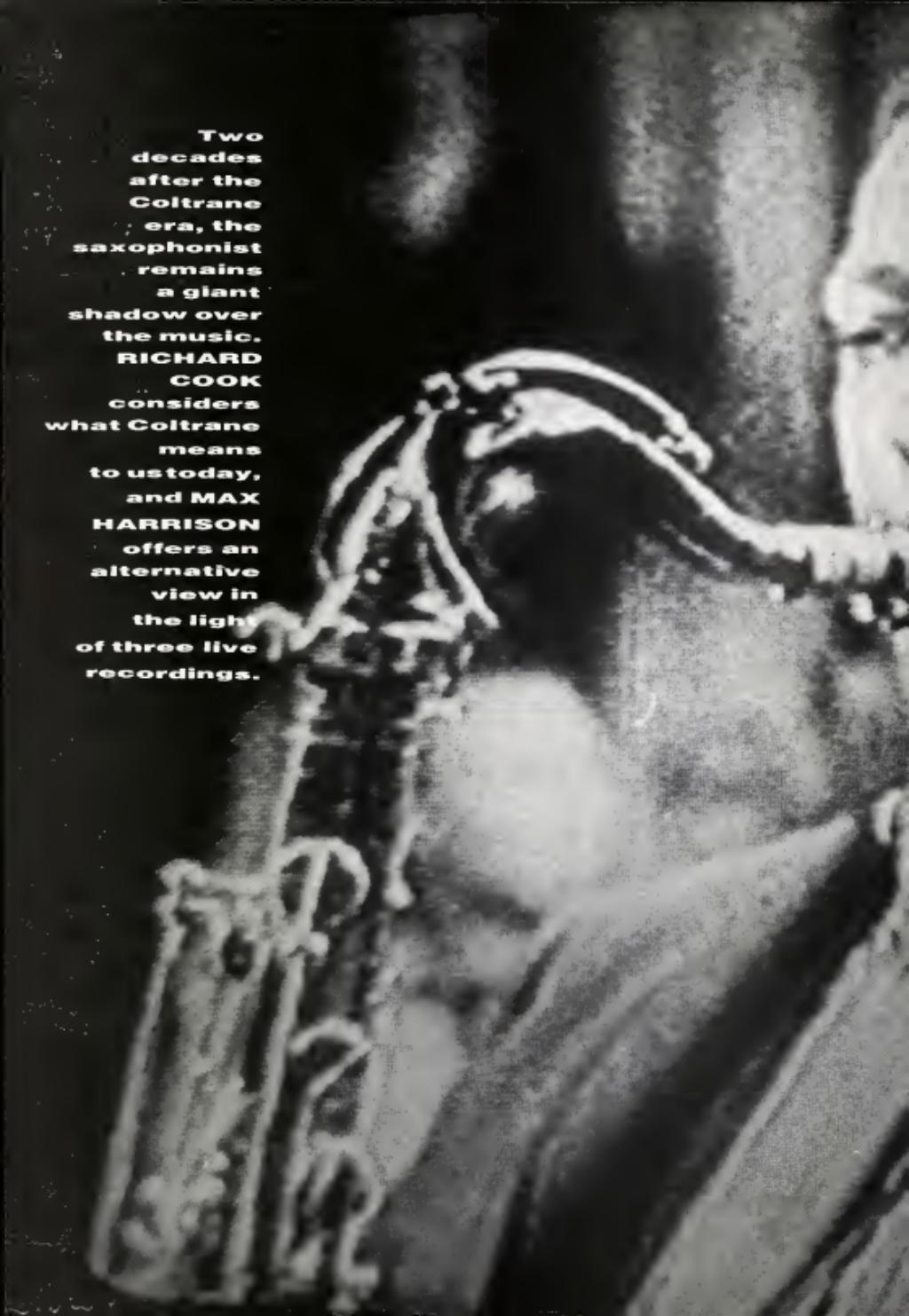
MANU DIBANGO Homemade (African)
ORNETTE COLEMAN This Is Our Music (Atlantic)

JIMMY GUIFFRE The Jimmy Guiffre Clarinet (Atlantic)

ALAN BUSH Violin Concerto (Hyperion)
GEORGE RUSSELL Jazz In The Space-Age (MCA)

HAL MCKUSICK Jazz Workshop (RCA)

... from Doug Power, London



Two decades after the Coltrane era, the saxophonist remains a giant shadow over the music.

RICHARD COOK considers what Coltrane means to us today, and **MAX HARRISON** offers an alternative view in the light of three live recordings.



JOHN COLTRANE
EVERYTIME I HEAR THE SOUND

LIKE ANYTHING else, Coltrane can become an obsession. A few years ago I wrote a long, congested piece about who he was and what he did and what he meant. For some weeks I listened to little other than that gargantuan sound, and it came to be like one ceaseless saxophone solo that pounded in my ears until I thought my head would break.

Twisting, charging, unrelenting, the sound drove on and on. I heard it in traffic noise, in the wind, in the central heating. I couldn't bring myself to play a Coltrane record for months afterward.

"There is nothing like Coltrane's sound," I concluded, and while one could say that about most any jazz musician with a distinctive timbre, it's the brazen physicality of those vibrations in-air that attacks the listener now. As early as "Good Bait", from his Prestige years, Coltrane assaults his available space, demanding that it breaks open before him.

"He was a very greedy man," Miles Davis told me — probably the first derogatory thing I'd ever heard from someone who was associated with him — and greed is encountered in the saxophonist's overweight lines, humourless tone, stomping attempts to cram in absolutely everything. Everything? No wonder he exhausts us even as the music drugs the emotions.

It's a curiosity about the sound, though, that it so persistently evades any description in the simple objectives which jazz criticism is wont to deal in. We can easily find the seductiveness in Lester Young, the rapt mechanics in Coleman Hawkins, the scholarly, steely brilliance in Sonny Rollins. None could mistake the tragic supremacism of Charlie Parker, or Sten Getz's buttery prettiness, or Ben Webster's portly beerhug of affection. But how do we describe Coltrane? He is the dilemma of anyone who's ever tried to pen a line about jazz.

Coltrane is almost never tender. In *A Love Supreme*, long distilled as the spiritual vanguard of 60s jazz, the music is restless, troubled, even — in "Pursuance" — verging on the neurotic. Yet it is intended as a prayer. It's actually more like the lonely inner conflict of a monk in his room. Only in his early ballad readings is there something akin to sweetness. There Coltrane recites melody. It is still without much vibrato, so the music is just more placid; gentle, but not especially warm.

Emotional touchstones are subsumed by the torrent of Coltrane's playing. We can search for nobility, anger or sadness in the saxophonist's movement and fail to locate any of them. Just as his lines reel on and on, so nothing rests long enough to take the clear shape of a communicated feeling. We're staggered by his violence, but this isn't the violence of Albert Ayler, which is generous in its gigantic emotion. Albert poured out everything. Coltrane turned it all inwards and could sound oblivious, even blind. As he explored himself and the quest to discover became an end in itself, there's almost a sense of his becoming inhuman. He transmutes into something which is as granite as an Easter Island figure, something — even in the midst of his turbulent movement — immovable. We're left with images which aren't emotional states — impressions of urgency, turmoil, mass.

THE DEVELOPMENT of Coltrane's art consists of the charting of this process. In one way, he hardly changes at all from "Good Bait" to the last versions of "Name", with their

abstract deviations of what was once a simple song. The barlines were being rattled already in 1958 — "Good Bait" shifts from Tedd Demerson's jaunty bop theme into the sheets of sound, and although he observes choruses, the chords have disappeared by the time Red Garland has his say. The tenor's talk is made up of arpeggios that twist and cheve at the beat, and points of stress punctuate the solo like convulsions. Coltrane is already wrapped up in the scale of what he's doing — only Rollins could have seized music with such an appetit then — and it's his surroundings which make this stage of the journey seem elementary. Garland, Chambers and Taylor sound prim and quaint.

In 1966, of course, with achievements of intensity like *Coltrane Jazz*, *A Love Supreme* and *Ascension* behind him, Coltrane had taken more giant steps than any of his peers. And he had impelled his surroundings to evolve too — to the point where they had actually moved beyond the point where he could grasp his position of command. Where the hard bop groups were too constrictively formal for his eloquence, the band with Pharoah Sanders, Alice Coltrane and Rashied Ali was too outreaching for Coltrane to play inside. They built a rocket pad of sheer energy, but it was Sanders not Coltrane that blasted most effectively out of Ali's rhythmic dust.

This is what we hear in the final "Name". Coltrane recorded it first as a graceful poem for his then wife, and the tune as played on *Giant Steps* is quite still and serene. In 1968, Sanders ignores any sort of karmic beauty and explodes away from the theme in a wild gush of croaking, sometimes vicious phrases. Coltrane follows in the same sort of vein, but he cannot exorcize the original "Name" — although he'd supposedly abandoned his older constraints of form, he can't seem to forget where he took breath, how he'd close choruses, when he'd have to sing a note clearly. Even after all his struggles — with embouchure, tone, rhythm and melody — he is still, underneath, the Coltrane of "Good Bait". Perhaps McCoy Tyner saw that when he chose to leave his old mentor in 1966: "I think that everything reaches its peak, and then it evaporates off . . ." Coltrane refused to acknowledge that peak.

It comes back, then, to that sound. The vast documentation of John Coltrane's output disguises how quickly he rushed through his career. Jazz has moved through all its resources with incredible velocity — 35 years between Oliver's "Dippermouth Blues" and Coleman's "Endless" — and Coltrane was no exception to the course, with all his identities compressed into a decade. Like Coleman Hawkins, who supposedly kept abreast of the many saxophone styles that surrounded his long career, Coltrane remained immediately himself — he was always the same man underneath, whether in the pinioning modes of *Kind Of Blue* or the gaunt peace of his valiadictory Expression. And the sound, which we can't fashion into anything other than the huge locomotive voice, played on.

Yet if it doesn't communicate such tidy matters as joy, sorrow or anger, what does Coltrane's sound impart to us? It would be lazy to say that it doesn't matter, that the process is all in itself, but such a verdict does go some way to explaining the magnetic pull of Coltrane even in 1985 — the reason why this prolific, earthquake music still exerts a unique fascination.

"IT WOULD", Evan Parker suggested, "do a lot of people good to go back and examine

Coltrane's life and music — to see the potential that that man did discover in himself. He was one of the great artists of the 20th century, and now they've almost reduced his music to a panting-by-numbers system. People should go back and look at the original."

Perker himself has become one of the few musicians to take Coltrane as a startling inspiration and build a personal style which is entirely original but distantly true to his first model. His comment illuminates what has become the Coltrane problem: because he is so colossal, so everywhere, we have alternately overdriven and dislodged Coltrane's own character. The sound is not just confined to the unbroken river of Coltrane's own records; it's in the thousands of trickles which are his second and third generation progeny.

There is Coltrane in every modern saxophone, just as there was Charlie Parker in every bop saxophone and — in a parallel universe — Jimi Hendrix in every rock guitar. But while the inflections of Bird were so easily brilliant, brilliant enough to burn his personality unmistakably into our memories, Coltrane's search without end for his inner self seemed to hide his own emotions. There is — again — just the sound. It became a blueprint system for anyone who's tried to play a 'modern' saxophone since.

With this, the passing of a passion so severe and unflinching into a common currency, we have obscured forever the impact of Coltrane in the first person. I was too young ever to hear him play in the flesh, and only records now remain; those, and a few feet of film. In the *Sound of Jazz* footage with Miles Davis, Coltrane looks as implacable and stone-faced as someone delivering a burial oration. He holds the tenor still, lost in concentration. On the soundtrack, there is the tumble of phrases, hooked together with the mottled iron tone. It actually seems a rather perfidious and disappointing image of the great player.

But greatness is inseparable from what we now keep of this working-class man from North Carolina. "He is so great," a colleague remarks when queried as to his admiration for Coltrane, and though fashioning myths is as unfortunate on this subject as it is for any other, the nature of Coltrane's work is so completely bound up in an indestructible, all-embracing power that 'greatness' is always the last impression we gain — whether in the majestic symmetries of "Out Of This World" or the headlong line over line in "Chasin' The Trane". And it's this measuring up to his aspirations — which he could never, inevitably, fulfill — that makes Coltrane persist, long after his death.

No, it's unimportant that we can't label his messages. It's the bearing of the message that matters. After *Giant Steps*, his one collection of songful, resolved music, he simply went off on the journey and misplaced the words. As John Llewellyn concludes in *The Freedom Principle*, when discussing the glorious *Interstellar Space* duets with Rashied Ali: "Now without obstacles of any kind, he nonetheless continues in conflict, endless and excited." It became all he knew how.

SO — AND perhaps here is the lesson we can understand — as the conflict of life continues, Coltrane's sound continues. And in compiling these thoughts and finally going back to the long works, I have started to hear him again. But it's not only the sound which is haunting. There is also a quotation from one of his comparatively rare interviews, a passage that is unforgettable: "Once you become aware of

this force for unity in life, you can't ever forget it. It becomes part of everything you do. My goal in meditating on this through music is to uplift people, as much as I can. To inspire them to realize more and more of their capacity for living meaningful lives."

In an age where dimwitted philosophers like Keith Jarrett have regrettably had their own say, such a statement could be treated with scepticism; but the sincerity of the words is an offer of involvement which is carried by the extremes of Coltrane's playing. The mighty storms of his music propose no beatific path to self-satisfaction or sensual pleasure. There's perhaps one occasion after *Giant Steps* where he pauses in the quest: "Alabama", from *Live At Birdland*, a requiem for children murdered in the bombing of a church and a matter of deep melancholy. Otherwise there is just the journeying – "endless and exalted".

It is, in the end, like a reflection on music. Whether it's Trane's *Reign* or *Meditations* that's on the turntable, it's the internal force of a man bearing down on his objectives with complete candour and commitment. Coltrane never escaped himself; he was never the most liberated of players; he located as many blind tunnels as shafts of light. If he was a mirror on his times, a receptacle of the turbulence of his era, then times haven't changed sufficiently for us to lose sight of his continuing relevance. The lengths he went to, and the sound he made on the way – it's worth making into the stuff of legend.

I'm glad he did it. Pley it, man.

JOHN COLTRANE The Copenhagen Concert (Ingo 4)

Recorded: Falkoncentret,
Stockholm – 22 November
1962.

*Chasin' The Trane; Every
Time We Say Goodbye; I
Want To Talk About You; Mr.
P.C.*

Coltrane (ss, ts); McCoy
Tyner (p); Jimmy Garrison
(b); Elvin Jones (d).

Impressions of Europe
(Ingo 7)

Recorded: as above.

Inch-Worm.

Recorded: Stefaniensaal,
Graz, Austria – 28 November
1962.

*Impressions; I Want To Talk
About You.*

Personnel as above.

A Love Supreme
(Ingo 11)

Recorded: Antibes – 26 July
1965.

**A Love Supreme (four
movements).**

Personnel as above.

I AM indebted to Brian Davis for some of the above discographical details, which are more complete than those given on the sleeves. The "Impressions" track has appeared on Musiclaid 30 JA 5242, but all the remaining items are on LP for the first time. (This version of "A Love Supreme" is quite different from the shorter one on *Jazz Connisseur* JC112.) The material on the first two discs is obviously from the Quartet's European tour of late 1962 and gives an excellent idea of what Coltrane's live performances were like at that time.

In some of his previous work the drive to exhaust the potentialities of any given harmonic situation, to crowd in every conceivable chordal substitution, to seek out all "meanings", led to incoherence. This desire was in any case unrealistic in that it is clearly impossible to explore simultaneously all sides of any situation. Some of Coltrane's performances prior to the formation of the above quartet (which has since come to be regarded, with just a bit too much unanimity, as one of the outstanding ensembles in jazz history) uncomfortably evoked the Tower of Babel. One thing he had not then done was to find the right drummer; but, as nearly all the music on these three Ingo records demonstrates, Jones was able to provide exactly the appropriate polyrhythmic framework to give shape to Coltrane's hitherto somewhat chaotic discoveries.

Listening to his and Jones's better duet improvisations can be a considerable musical experience, yet beyond questions of formal organization darker emotional states were beginning to assert themselves, and even when this jazz is outwardly relaxed it suggests inward apprehension. Frequently it is at once extrovert and grim, and on, say, "Mr. P.C." saxophone and drums share a lurking desire to communicate sombre thoughts. However, often Tyner was the stabilizing agent in performances that seemed likely to fly asunder, his lyrical strain relieving the dense passions of reed and percussion. In "Mr. P.C." and "Impressions" his solos are made from showers of crystalline notes which have an almost visible brilliance. During the former piece Jones subjects us to a frenetic solo battering with his cross-rhythms, and then Coltrane, starting the music's other dimensions into a surprised awakening, enters at full strength, as if he had already been playing for several choruses. Probably "chorus" is misleading in that here and in "Impressions" form has become no more than an outline, and moods pass in and out of focus on a pathless terrain of contrasting, even conflicting, emotions.

The long solos taken here submit Coltrane to the most severe tests, yet against all probability the logic holds nearly throughout in each case; there are a few stock repetitive phrases, but no ranting. In comparison, the feverish, troubled "Inch-Worm" lacks continuity. Between these relative extremes comes the tenor solo on "Chasin' The Trane", which, even allowing for some primitive rasp, is at first argued quite strictly from the opening motif. Later, coherence is lost despite Jones's urgent commentary, which at some points comes close to taking the lead.

THOUGH FULL of sour shafts of melody, the ballads are not so very different, and even in calm passages a higher aspiration is evident. During the initial melody statement of "Every Time We Say Goodbye" Coltrane already makes quite drastic, if brief, exploratory departures, although mainly this piece is the subject of a decorative Tyner solo. Much of the Stockholm version of "I Want To Talk About You" consists of a still freer reading of the melody in that while he departs much further from it than from "Every Time", he for a long while does not lose the thematic outline. This is a fine example of organic growth in improvisation, though some of his later phrases derive rather mechanically from the chords so emphatically stated by Tyner. The account of "I Want To Talk About You" from Graz is slightly longer, with a plainer opening statement. After that, Coltrane plunges into a journey through the harmonies which is more

inventively melodic, and more variously phrased, than the other version; there is more depth and less tumult here. Each performance ends with an unaccompanied cadence which attempts to summarize and resolve all that has gone before; but, like so much of what this band did, these are too long.

No doubt most readers will be thoroughly familiar with the original Impulse recording of "A Love Supreme", done in December 1964. Ingo's alternative concert performance is both disconcerting and extremely welcome, healthily unsettling our fixed notions of how the music should go. The New York and Antibes versions are very different yet have a comparable feeling of completeness. This is partly because although the four movements have themes of their own, everything ultimately descends from a single four-note motif through which is achieved a level of unity highly unusual in a work containing so much improvisation. Perhaps the spontaneous developmental procedures Coltrane employs here derive ultimately from his crucial period with Monk – whose influence on several vital aspects of the jazz of his time becomes ever more apparent. But the full discussion this new version demands must wait for another occasion.

Significantly enough, although nobody has tried to follow-up singular ventures like "A Love Supreme" in any specific way, Coltrane's general manner has, of course, been even more widely imitated, and with still less perception, than that of Charlie Parker. What these countless echoes tell us is that it is much easier to imitate a striking new style of playing than to absorb new, and deeper lead, processes of musical organization. The most shrewd explanation of Coltrane's – for a jazzman – abnormal popularity will be found on page 488 of James Lincoln Collier's *The Making of Jazz*. To which it might be added that during the 1960s – and this parallels what has just been said about the superficial response of his fellow musicians – many young people were attracted not to the strictly musical characteristics of his work but to its obvious outward turmoil, seeing in this an apparent kinship with their own current discontents.

All that is a long time ago now, and, following at a fastidious distance from the egregious myth-making of people like Frank Kofsky (*Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*, etc), it is time we tried to see Coltrane plainly, clearly, and whole. Like anyone else whose output was very large, his music is of extremely varied quality, and just because of their unevenness these unfamiliar performances are as good a place as any to make a start. ■



JAYNE HOUGHTON

SCREEN REVIEW

CYNTHIA ROSE reports from Dallas on the opening of Shirley Clarke's *Ornette: Made in America*.

SINCE HIS New York debut at the Five-Spot in 1959, Ft Worth's Ornette Coleman has generally been considered the most influential individual to have emerged in Afro-American art music since Charlie Parker. Most critics also regard him as the first truly "free" player: a musician whose work rejects previously established harmonic structures and barlines in favour of sheer invention and exploration.

For these reasons alone, documentarian Shirley Clarke's 90-minute *Ornette: Made in America* was bound to provoke fascination and curiosity. Also because, like her subject, Clarke has remained in the avant-garde of her art – best-known for a screen adaptation of Jack Gelber's seminal 1960 play *The Connection*, for films like *The Cool World*, *Portrait of Jason* and two collaborations with Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaiken: *Seavage/Love* and *Tongues*. Add to this that Clarke spent an incredible 20 years on her Coleman project, working from their first meeting in 1964.

The artist (including Clarke and Coleman), media pundits and homelots who packed out Ft Worth's Caravan of Dreams for the premiere of the Caravan phenomenon (it was produced by the art centre's initiator Kathelin Hoffmann) never saw the film. After numerous delays and erroneous announcements, the highly publicised screening had to be aborted less than a third of the way through due to "projection difficulties".

What did they miss? A unique project whose composition rejects boundaries like chronology and cinematic narrative in favour of a more allusive path to "roots" and sources – just like Coleman's music. Consisting of every known celluloid format (super 8, 16 and 35mm, television film, and video) all blown up to 35mm, Clarke's movie offers jump-cut glimpses and sounds of the early environments which may have influenced Ornette's odyssey. These are intercut with critical evaluations and valentines, musical reminiscences, and extended slices of performance. Its locations leap from Ft Worth – where numerous sequences at and around the Caravan often appear as nutty as they do "artistic" – to New York, Berkeley, Italy, Nigeria and Morocco.

Much of the footage is riveting and none is "definitive"; the movie leaves its viewer quite able to measure for himself or herself Coleman's undisputed musical genius against his undeniable eccentricities. For instance, over halfway through the film the articulate, thoughtful Ornette discusses how in his early 30s he tried to convince doctors to castrate him. ("After having married and having a kid I wanted to eliminate any sexual feeling from my body.")

Swayed into settling for circumcision, Coleman says he eventually worked out that "being physical or sexual has nothing to do with what you think or believe, but with who you think you're affecting and how you think you're affecting them". He contends he had concluded that there are two types of "human being": "Male and female and man and woman; and I'd rather be a man than a male."

In passages like these (or in his recollec-

tions of the Jejouka musicians with whom he played in Morocco: "It was at a more creative than a religious level, because religion, you know, is usually emotional and creativity is above emotion") one can detect the scientist of sound who has pursued his explorations so thoroughly. ("So I could play whatever passed through my heart and head without even worrying was it 'right' or 'wrong'.")

The combination of Clarke's inventiveness and Coleman's idiosyncrasies weaving in and out of performances (mainly the Ft Worth Symphony's presentation of Coleman's "Skies of America" with his own septet Prime Time) is often stunning. And many relationships – on many levels – are suggested. Past to present, native geography to artistic aesthetics or growth, the interdisciplinary influence of one artist upon another (here it is Buxminster Fuller, a hero whose genius Ornette plays homage to at length).

THE MOST touching is that between Coleman and his son Denardo – for 20 years his father's drummer and now also his manager. We see Nardo at 12 ("What is it you do that is different to other drummers, without having something to go by?" queries Dad); we see him taken to visit the old slum neighbourhood in Ft Worth; we see him drumming with his father via satellite link between Harlem and the Lower East Side. Finally, we are made privy to his apprehensions – he describes how his father was badly beaten twice within six months on the abandoned schoolhouse premises where Ornette hopes to create a "Multi-Plate Expression Center" in New York.

Of course there is footage of other legendary players: Ed Blackwell, Charlie Haden, Don Cherry and Dewey Redman from Coleman's '60-'75 band; Jamaaladeen Tacuma, Benn Nix, Albert McDowell, Sabon Kamal, and Charles Ellerbe from the later Prime Time. And there are reminiscences of more – in a Ft Worth Ben-B-Que joint, Ornette recalls how, when he got to New York, he found King Curtis "driving a Rolls Royce and opening for the Beatles". And therein lies the only real quibble with this genuinely historic documentary – it should perhaps have stuck a little longer to the orally and surely delivered history-and-mystery of its subject himself.

Both young Gene Tatum and younger Denardo Marshall are meaningfully employed as personifications of the youthful Ornette, reinserted into his original physical environment on the East Side of Ft Worth. But I'd gladly have sacrificed fancifully animated sequences of Coleman in outer space to hear from the man or his original pals: how cousin James Jordan first encouraged him to play. Or some mention of famous schoolmates such as Charles Moffat, Dewey Redman and Prince Leshe. Downtown and ghetto-side Cowtown are heavily visualized, but we hear nothing extended about Coleman's actual experience there, spending half his day at school and half his nights in disreputable hangouts where the musicians were underage but the competition in the atmosphere was fierce. For here Info, Clarke focuses more on her footage from California and Manhattan – where Coleman's public career, rather than his most basic influences, are the issue.

Still, *Made in America* offers a wealth of well-crafted material (if not without a familiar artist-comes-home-to-the-Philistines bias). It's

definitely valuable – and even able to hold its own with its famous subject's soundtrack.

–CR

RICHARD COOK checks out *Brigitte Berman's Artie Shaw: Time Is All You've Got*.

I FOUND Brigitte Berman's much-praised *Artie Shaw* to be a rather soft and sentimental film, and the prospect of her dealing with a much tougher nut – the elusive Artie Shaw – looked far more promising. *Time Is All You've Got* is a strong piece of work as far as film biogs of jazzmen go, but somewhere the director seems to slacken her grip on her subject.

She films Shaw sitting and talking – volubly, wittily, harshly – in his comfortably cluttered home on the west coast. Because he's an engrossing talker, there are long takes of reminiscing which are usually justified; as if realizing she has a one-and-only here, Berman cuts the film as if every segment with Shaw is valuable. And I suppose it is, given the rather unexciting older material and sometimes perfunctory interviews with others (Mel Torme, Helen Forrest and – most tellingly – a mere 20 seconds of the unfortunate Buddy Rich).

Certainly Shaw is a mine of unlikely insights. What emerges most strongly is his really quite incredible distaste for business interfering in art. If his manner hardly suggests the frail artistic spirit – at 75 he looks very strong, and his mouth is molonkoi – the decisions he took in his career speak of a remarkable love of music for its own sake, even though he's offhand about his coming into this line of work in the first place.

We hear of his startling abdication from the big at the very moment he secured the top band position in *Downbeat's* poll; the disgust he felt when a promoter told him that if it meant "getting more customers I could pull down my pants and shit on the bandstand". There is his exhausting tour of the Pacific during the war, and the nervous breakdown it brought on; his eight marriages ("I know more about divorce than I do about marriage!"); his gruff insistence on tunes ("*Nocturne*") and sounds (a string section) alien to the big bands; the dues he paid for employing black musicians like Hot Lips Page and Billie Holiday.

Berman gets it all in, but the film seems to grow ponderous over two hours; 20 minutes less wouldn't have hurt. And there is still some sentiment, some rather meandering shots of pretty homesteads. This, after all, is the man who said jibberbugging is for morons.

If it's clear how demanding and difficult Shaw was and is, *Time Is All You've Got* is still sympathetic and revealing portrait. Artie sits listening to his record of "The Blues", the clarinet's dazzling technique stinging in our ears, and you can see him trying his best not to let a grin spread over his face. An extraordinary life, neatly capsule. ●

–RC

(Ornette: Made in America is showing at the Everyman Cinema on 27 November; *Artie Shaw: Time Is All You've Got* is being screened at London's NFT on 1 December. Both screenings form part of the 1985 London Film Festival. Details from the box office on 01-928 3232).



Artie Shaw as a young genius

Ornette as a mad genius



CHRISTMAS QUIZ



**HERE'S A LITTLE
something to
exercise the grey
matter on while
you're munching
a mince pie or
two. If you get
all the answers
right, award
yourself The
Wire's medal of
honour, because
we've nothing left
to offer as prizes.**



1. Where did John Gilmore find Hope?
2. Who was the second saxophone player on the lost session of *A Love Supreme*?
3. Who improvised on "England's Christmas Carol"?
4. What was (allegedly) John Coltrane's reply to Miles Davis' question "Why do you play so long, man?"
5. What was Miles Davis' alleged reply to John Coltrane's remark "Sometimes when I start a solo I don't know how to finish it"?
6. Who gave us "Winter in Wonderland" as an alternative?
7. Whose mother called him Bill?
8. What was Shorty when he wasn't cool?
9. What clarinet player recorded John Coltrane's "Red Planet" 35 years after recording "Riverboat Shuffle"?
10. Which be-bop master shered an "April in Paris" with Eric Dolphy and who was the pianist on the rest of the gig?
11. Odd person out! Who is it here?
 - Count Basie
 - Ben Webster
 - Lester Young
 - Hot Lips Page
12. Who was Blind Willie Dunn?
13. Who dressed up as Santa Claus for what Blue Note album cover?
14. Who took the "Londonderry Air" in a "25½ Daze" and saw how "Green Grow The Rushes"?
15. How tall is Randy Weston? (One inch either way!)
16. Whose first record was called "Your Mother's Son-In-Law"?
17. Who plays piano with Shelly Manne on "Me And Some Drums"?
18. What's the connexion between Ornette Coleman, Lennie Tristano and Lem Winchester?
19. Who was Misty as well as Something Cool?
20. Who blows a Summit of Soprano?
21. What keys were the blues in, according to Benny Carter and Art Tatum?
22. Who allegedly said these:
 - "Aw, get a piccio"
 - "You ought to be the president of the deaf and dumb society!"
 - "Just let the band play here comes the bride!"
 - "Block chords, Red"
23. Who recorded these LPs?
 - Half A Dog Can't Kiss
 - Nasty
 - Malikots A Fare Thought
 - We Free Kings
 - Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly! Fly!
24. Who was the drummer on Capitol's Ten Cats And A Mouse session, a date involving bandleaders Billy May, Benny Carter, Red Norvo, Paul Weston and Bobby Sherwood?
25. When Denzil Best first worked with Mingus, what instrument did he play?
26. Name Count Basie's only No. 1 pop hit.
27. What do Kid Ory, Tampa Red, Little Richard, Eddie Sanfranski, Oscar Moore and Tiny Parham all have in common?
28. Name the odd one out - Mel Torme, Lennie Tristano, Quincy Jones, Miles Davis, Frankie Trumbauer, Roy Kral, Julian Priester, Abbey Cliford Jordan, Inn Ray Hutton, Abbey Lincoln and Lionel Hampton.
29. Who is/was?
 - Anne Marie Wooldridge
 - Melvin Sokoloff
 - Andreinenemantua Peul Razafinkenelo
 - Conrad Henry Kirton
 - Core Celhoun
30. Who used the following pseudonyms?
 - Art Salt
 - Eddie Lagune
 - Chuck Thomas
 - Cinderella G. Stump
31. Who provided the soundtrack music for the following films?
 - Anatomy Of A Murder
 - Sapphire
 - 666
 - St Ives
 - Uptown Saturday Night

ANSWERS ON PAGE 58



"And after "Winter in Wonderland", I'm gonna do "Frosty The Snowman"!"



"Hey, we're nasty!"





PAYING GUESTS

The Guest Stars consider the cost of being a feminist collective in a society geared to individualism and a lot of balls. GRAHAM LOCK finds language turning malevolent on him.

"THE BEST accolade a woman singer used to get was that she sang with balls," laughs Guest Star Lake Daical. "Rather a contradiction, I think."

Quite. Language is a weapon too. Reading a few old Blue Note sleeves recently, I noticed that Dexter Gordon's sound was described approvingly as "masculine", like Quebec's es "virile" – seemingly innocuous epithets that hide a knotty tangle of assumptions about gender, sound and value which leaves this writer rattled and confused. How, for example, do you describe a woman tenor player whose sound is similar to Gordon's or Quebec's? Where are the words for a specifically female kind of strength? Can strength, or sound, even be differentiated on a gender basis? Why is it (supposedly) a compliment to tell a woman she plays like a man, and (supposedly) an insult to tell a man he plays like a woman? The sexist bias of language extends down into biological metaphor: "seminal" denotes great importance, "hysterical" a freakish aberration. (One could even speculate on the relationship between male sexuality and male musical structure, like how come a piece of music is generally allowed to have only one climax?) If these anomalies can reduce a relatively privileged male writer to teeth-gnashing perplexity, imagine the havoc they wreak on female writers and female musicians trying to find an authentic means of expression in what is basically a – dare I say? – malevolent language.

"I'm forever trying to find the female style of playing the drums," grins fellow (aaargh!) Guest Star Josefinia Cupido, drawing on her umpteenth cigarette of the evening. "Well, I say that as a joke, but I really don't know... I often think about that in relation to my instrument because you do have to be so overtly physical to play the drums, and given the fact that all the music that has gone before has been written mostly by men – the way the rhythms have developed and so on – it is male music, I think."

"I sometimes feel I actually don't have the ability to play... hard funk, for example, which to me feels a very masculine sound, very aggressive," she shrugs. "I often feel inadequate on my instrument, and I know that has to do with technique, but then in a sense I don't know what technique is – like, who made all the rules and the standards... it's men, isn't it? So it's very difficult. I find it hard to play something that is absolutely rigid and consistent – is that because it's an essentially male sound? Because I'm a woman? I just don't know where those lines begin and end."

"I think a lot of drummers would find it oppressive to be called a timekeeper," frowns Daical.

"But it's also implicit in the job," Cupido argues. "I do know it's taken a long time for me to play my instrument assertively because women are not taught to be assertive. I don't know how it applies to other instruments, but with the drums it's clear, because, in society, like, men hit things." She sips her coffee reflectively.

Daical, meanwhile, is sitting through some press cuttings. "Journalists are usually very careful how they write about us, but sometimes... oh, here's one: 'Linda Da Mingo and Josefinia Cupido combine to produce a wonderful tapestry'... now," she laughs, "is this knitting or what?"

JOSEFINA CUPIDO and Laka Deical are, respectively, drummer/singer and pianist/singer with The Guest Stars, a group of six women musicians who have rapidly grown into one of Britain's most popular, and most-travelled, jazz bands. Their lively blend of jazz, pop, soul, Latin and African musics has taken them from the pokey back-rooms of London pubs to several international festivals and tours of America, Germany, Spain and (currently) the Middle East; meanwhile the success of their first, self-financed LP has prompted a second, *Out At Night*, due for December release: achievements that, at their

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outset, the band had never dreamed possible. The Guest Stars began life in the early 1980s as a trio of women musicians — Julia Doyle (bass), Sue Ellery (piano), Ruthie Smith (saxes) — who wanted to explore jazz and thought a good way of doing so would be to play each gig with a different assortment of guests, hence the band's name. Gradually the basic personnel expanded, proved relatively stable (the current line-up of Cupido, Deisicel, Smith, guitarist Deloise Cartwright, percussionist Linda Da Mango and bassist Alison Rayner has remained unchanged for the past eighteen months) and The Guest Stars became, both *de facto* and by choice, a women's band. The political consequences of that decision have proved both exciting and problematic, and are still being worked through.

"We try to work as a collective," explains Deisicel, "and I think one reason we do that is because it's been part of the experience of the whole Women's Movement — in which we've all been involved — to come together to share knowledge, and to break down feelings of oppression and resentment at work."

"We believe in that process too," adds Cupido. "That way of working is fundamental to how we want to conduct our lives. It's aspiring to have control over our own destiny — which has become a boring phrase, I know, but I think it still applies, particularly in the music business, which is traditionally the place where things get appropriated and packaged. It's difficult to do because our society is geared to individualism, our whole conditioning is that of struggling for your own area, whether that's a living situation or a working situation."

"It may turn out that collectivism is our undoing in the end," agrees Deisicel, "that collectivism and individual expression are mutually incompatible. I just don't know. I think the collective idea is easier to pursue in a jazz context because the way you put the music together involves so much trust, improvisation means you're listening and giving. But at the same time there are certainly six very strong pulls in the band, and I don't think anyone has the illusion that we're going to be together in five years' time."

The band's struggle for control has slowly extended across several different areas; for instance, their decisions to a) stop playing jazz standards and concentrate on original material; b) start their own record label rather than seek record company support; c) produce their own records; d) organize their own tours; and e) handle, as far as possible, and with the help of their administrator Debbie Dickinson, their own publicity, promotion and advertising. The fact that they are an all-women band has proved both a help and a hindrance here, bringing them some useful publicity but also a train of patronizing males — like the musician who told Cupido her solos would "sound more effective if I wore a dress", and the journalists and promoters who still insist on calling them an "all-girl" band.

"If you added up our ages, you'd realize 'girls' wasn't at all appropriate," Deisicel remarks acidly. "My favourite publicity blurb actually dates back to 1978, before The Guest Stars, when I was in Sculiyard. We were on a bill with both women's and mixed bands, but we arrived at the gig to find the promoter had billed us as 'well-to-well women' — you know, like, walk all over them."

"Still, it bothers me just as much that in Germany now, for instance, The Guest Stars are referred to as a salsa band. That's equally inappropriate."

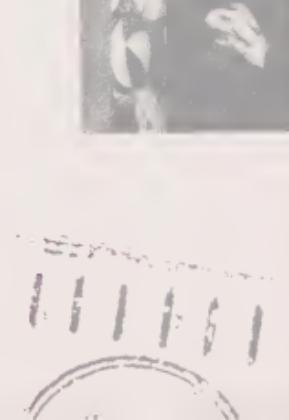
FINDING THE right words to describe The

Guest Stars can be a tricky business, not only because of the sexist bias of language but also because the group's music is so eclectic. If their commitment to "leaving space for improvisation" reveals a basic allegiance to jazz, it's also true that they use many elements of pop structure and are adept at numerous styles, from gospel to calypso. Such diversity may be a strength — and the band's live popularity suggests it is — but it also brings criticisms: that The Guest Stars have no coherent musical identity of their own, that they are simply cultural magpies — in their own words, "the white Western musician with flapping ears" syndrome.

"We do talk about whether it's becoming a weakness," admits Deisicel. "The danger obviously is that it all becomes a pastiche, but I think we'd resist that. It is hard, as privileged white Western women, to get the balance right; to acknowledge the musical debt we owe to Black people, to acknowledge our privileges as white people, and at the same time, to insist that we do have something to say. But that's not unique to us, an awful lot of white people have to contend with that if they're trying to express themselves in a true way."

"And, again, I think our diversity is also a result of our collectivism; it's inherent in the nature of the band."

Still, I think my one big disappointment with the new LP, I say, is that even the diversity has become predictable; it just sounds like a better version of the first LP.



"But that's precisely why I'm not disappointed," protests Cupido, "because it does sound like a better version of the first LP."

There's nothing new, no surprises, I complain. To me, The Guest Stars are much more enjoyable live than on record; a good night out, but less satisfying in the cold light of home listening.

"If that's true, it's probably very healthy," Cupido laughs.

"In terms of our everyday experience, we're very much a live band," Deisicel points out. "If you look at the time we spend in the studio — a month around May, 1984, about a month in September '85, the odd session, and that's it. The rest of the time is all live work, and that's really one of the main reasons why The Guest Stars exist. We're in The Guest Stars because we enjoy playing with each other live."

The converse of that, presumably, being that women who choose to make music their vocation have to make more sacrifices than men do?

"In some ways, potentially, yeah," Deisicel considers. "Babies, in particular. We were saying on the boat back from Germany last night that if we were boys, the chances are that some of us would have babies at home and it wouldn't affect the amount of touring we did. Whereas, if any of us had babies, although I think the band could accommodate that, it would certainly make life a lot more complicated."

"I did make that decision when I chose to be a musician," Cupido agrees.

"It might be different if we were studio musicians," adds Deisicel, "but it's a choice that men don't have to make, certainly. Personally, I don't want babies so for me it's not a problem, but for other people in the band, it is more of a direct choice."

If there are costs, at least The Guest Stars are doing what they choose to do; they have control. There are pressures on all women in jazz, but for a feminist collective they must be enormous: The Guest Stars are trying simultaneously to blaze political trails, develop musically, stay together, and remain in touch with their populist roots. On top of that, they're also in what Deisicel calls "the cleft stick" of keeping faith with the fact that they are women musicians, while also wanting to be recognized as musicians rather than tokens. One comfort is that, while women musicians may still be relatively scarce, The Guest Stars are not alone.

"The reason I love festivals," remarks Deisicel, "is that so much different music is going on, and it's nice to be just one different thing in a whole heap of different things. 'Cause I think we are different, but we're not Martians."

BACK AT the typewriter, the journalist is pondering that word *knitting*. A whole new area for debate opens up: domestic activity as musical metaphor. Weaving rhythms, threading solos, cooking bands. A polished performance, a half-baked idea. What can we glean here of the complex web of relationships between gender, language and sound? Not a lot, perhaps.

Still, it comes as no surprise to hear that The Guest Stars, never exactly the humourless feminists of male mythology, were planning to give away a free *ta-towel* with every copy of their new LP.

"In the end we couldn't afford it, the recording cost too much," sighs Leka Deisicel. "But it's a great shame. I think maybe we'd have done better to record on a four-track and give away kitchen equipment."

How can you pan a group like that? ●

WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY SYNTHESIZES

Don't panic. It's just AL DI MEOLA playing with the machinery. Our man with the digital notebooks.

MIKE ZWEBIN-

EVERYBODY WANTS to be a star, stars endorse products. We walk around with t-shirts like sandwich boards endorsing universities and bowling alleys we've never seen. Or rock bands we have seen; a Gypsy I met was wearing a 'Bob Seger World Tour' windbreaker. We endorse ourselves; the other day I saw a t-shirt on Blvd St. Germain that read, 'I'm nice'.

The credit on the jacket of his album *Soaring Through A Dream* reads, in part: "Al Di Meola - Synclav guitar, Guild X-500-SB guitar, Ovation acoustic guitar". A half-page box listing "Al Di Meola's equipment" accompanying an interview in *Down Beat* included something called a "Mesa Boogie amp".

Equipment credits are becoming as essential as birth dates for musicians' profiles (which are no longer typed but processed; I use a Kaypro II). At first sight such lists might be considered part of our pervasive 'product-drugging' mentality. But though musicians do not yet wear logo-quilted jerseys like bicycle racers, a lay concertgoer may wonder why so many keyboard players are named 'Rhodes'. Brand names displayed with today's technologically top-heavy pop music are often generic facts rather than endorsements.

The digital computer-operated guitar-triggered Synclevier that Di Meola now plays is not the same instrument as a Moog, though both are synthesizers. "With the Synclevier," he says, "you can tap a wine glass with a spoon, record it and then make chords out of the sound. The computer memorizes whatever you put into it and then plays it back in whatever form you desire."

Keyboard synthesizers have been around and growing more complex for a while, but the guitar synth is still a new toy and, along with Pat Metheny, Di Meola is one of the first kids on the block to play with one: "I can go out with a Sony two-track digital recorder (sic!), sample a guy hammering a hubcap, come back and feed it into the computer and make guitar music out of it. I'm able to use a whole spectrum of new sounds which have never before been available to guitar players."

Wine-glass-tapping and hubcap-hammering would please John Cage, who has said: "I haven't yet heard sounds that I didn't enjoy, except when they became too musical." Nevertheless, old-fashioned as it may appear, some nostalgics pine for the days when Ben Webster was Ben Webster rather than a digital sampling of Ben Webster.

"In the past," Di Meola responds, with no nostalgia whatsoever, "the personality of musicians was embedded in their own sound because they didn't have other sounds at their disposal. Today technology is making so many new sounds available to us, either you remain in the dark ages or you move ahead with the times. I'm going ahead."

'guitar music' and what constitutes 'personality'? Questions which produce first a pained expression on a face that reflects the view from the winner's circle, and then — God bless America — an answer from a supply-side point of view: 'A lot of musicians are afraid they will be put out of work. Rightly so.' But it's true enough; now that one operator can conjure orchestral proportion, human sections are considered increasingly inefficient. Di Meola takes what may well be a realistic, if not terribly empathetic, view of the future of those who choose not to 'go ahead'.

"These are people who take the bus from the suburbs to New York and read the financial page during an eight-bar rest. In a way they have only themselves to blame. Union scale for one musician per day in the studios is \$700. It's gotten out of hand. And what if I don't like it once the date is over? Screwed. With a Syncclavier I can add, subtract, loop — I have the freedom to do all the crazy things I want to do without worrying about negative human attitudes. But no machine will ever replace a great soloist. Virtuoso musicians will not be put out of work. Only lazy musicians."

Anything but lazy, Di Meola is built for speed. Ever since he became a name with Chick Corea's *Return To Forever*, no guitarist could get so loud a cheer from as many people by spraying such an astonishing number of notes into a measure. Although he insists that "The Synclavier doesn't play you, you play it", the machine appears to have a positive effect on him. The ability to sample silence, along with hubcap-taps, in advance, has in a sense programmed maturity into his software. His music has become better paced, if "noiser" in the Cagan sense, though we might quibble and ask what difference the trigger makes since a synthesizer still sounds like a synthesizer.

And "space" implies outer space – spacy – more than silence: "The beauty of this machine is the space it provides. It has helped me move away from technique-oriented music. That aspect is what brought me to prominence. After leaving Chick's band, I felt I had to continue in that vein because my audience expected it of me."

"Now I'm interested in originality rather than quantity. I no longer want to be blown away by music. It's a whole new me." ■



"They tell me the job carries no pension."



JEAN HANS BRIBAUX

GREAT RECORDINGS

Kenny Mathieson

examines a classic Miles Davis album.

BITCHES BREW

(CBS 66236)

Pharaoh's Dance; Bitches Brew; Spanish Key; John McLaughlin; Miles Runs the Voodoo Down; Sanctuary Miles Davis (t); Wayne Shorter (ss); Bernie Maupin (bc); John McLaughlin (g); Chick Corea (ep); Joe Zawinul (ep); Larry Young (ep); Dave Holland (b); Harvey Brooks (eb); Lenny White (d); Jack DeJohnette (d); Charles Alias (d); Jim Riley (pc).

Recorded: New York 19-21 August, 1969.

IN BITCHES BREW, recorded in three sessions late in 1969 and released the following year, Miles Davis laid the cornerstone of jazz-rock.

Not for the first time, Davis seized upon an emerging idea and set the standard for its development. The four sides of *Bitches Brew* not only represent one of the unquestionably great peaks of fusion music, but also crucially influenced the nature of the form, not least in that most of its subsequent stars passed through his group at this time. Rock and jazz had been held at arm's length more through snobbery than any inherent musical barriers; while Davis was far from first to see the potential of rock elements in the music he was creating, it was he who was able to give coherent expression and direction to his insights.

Davis had dabbled with rock borrowings in a fragmented way since the mid-Sixties, but the 1969 album *In A Silent Way* represented a significant development in this direction, as well as a kind of prologue to *Bitches Brew*. Drummer Tony Williams and bassist Dave Holland laid down a regular, sustained rhythm, over which the ensemble weaved a spacious, shimmering improvisation behind the solo instrument. The three electric keyboards, with John McLaughlin's guitar, form the dynamic centre of the group; it is in their subtle interplay that the distinctive textures of the music emerge. Davis made use of one further electronic 'instrument': the recording studio. The album was edited down from some two

hours of playing to less than ten minutes per side, then extended again by use of repeated sections.

The regular, defined rhythm (at a time when free jazz encouraged abstraction) and the use of electric instruments obviously draws on elements identified with rock. Davis has sometimes been credited with 'inventing' jazz-rock; if this is an exaggeration, he certainly produced the embryonic form's two most influential recordings, and gathered together the central core of players who would go on to dominate it. Most of the early fusion work had come from the rock side of the equation, with British groups like Soft Machine and Colosseum – or the rather different US sound of Davis's Columbia label-mates Chicago and Blood, Sweat and Tears – achieving a prominence largely denied the more jazz-based bands. Rock musicians had learned to take themselves seriously (not always to the good) in the 1960s, most overtly reflected in the emergence of virtuoso instrumentalists like Jimi Hendrix. The long, blues-based solo had entered the rock as well as the jazz repertoire, but rock itself was showing signs of reaching a point of exhaustion by the turn of the decade.

In retrospect, the titles of these records are not only evocative of the music they contain, but curiously reflective of the violent nemesis which overtook rock in those two years. *In A Silent Way* suggests the restrained, airy, thoughtful atmosphere of the music, in the year of Woodstock; *Bitches Brew*, released in the year of Altamont, is an altogether darker album, more dense, more intense, recalling an earlier Davis flirtation in *Sorcerer*. Delighted with the success of the augmented ensemble on *Silent Way*, Davis again recruited three electric keyboards (restricted to two on some cuts); to these he added three drummers and a fourth percussion player. With both electric and acoustic bass, the rhythmic and chromatic possibilities multiplied.

Generally, a single drum and bass lay down a regular pulse, although there are sections which employ no set rhythm, leaving the ensemble to explore extended polyrhythmic structures over that base, demanding an almost intuitive improvisatory understanding between the players. The brew produced in this cauldron is a significant departure from the earlier record; much of the dark, brooding, almost incantatory quality of tracks like 'Bitches Brew' or 'Miles Runs the Voodoo Down' is supplied by his other, inspired, addition to the group, Bernie Maupin's bass clarinet. His sinister lower register figures extend the dynamic range of the music, as does Wayne Shorter's soprano sax at the opposite end, and are crucial in injecting the almost demonic intensity which characterises the sound of

Bitches Brew.

These extended, polytonal structures are built upon simple basic material, drawing on the improvising abilities of the group under Davis's direction. According to drummer Lenny White, 'there weren't any real roles. There was a sketch and everybody would play to the sketch for a minute or however long the sketch was, eight or twelve bars. There would be a tonal centre and the rest was left up to everybody else.' The blend which emerges from this most difficult of proceedings (Davis has to audibly order John McLaughlin to play at one point on 'Bitches Brew') is sometimes uncanny, even allowing for studio editing. The ensemble respond to Davis's prompting on the trumpet with all the intimacy of a small chamber group, the complex collective improvisations anchored by the secure rhythmic pulse.

Davis's trumpet dominates the solo role on the record and he is in magnificent form, nowhere more so than on 'Miles Runs the Voodoo Down'. He interchanges blues phrases with intense chromatic explorations, and produces a virtuoso display of trumpet technique – switching register and rhythm, long lines and short phrases, explosive bursts and tenses, introspective passages, always carrying the ensemble with him. His amplified trumpet soars above the dense interplay of the group, playing off and against them, drawing them out in a complex version of the classic blues call-and-response pattern in each of the major pieces on the album.

While not as heavily edited as *Silent Way*, studio effects are prominent again, and producer Teo Macero makes an important contribution to the finished product. Davis was increasingly interested in the possibilities of using electronic effects in his playing, as in the echo and reverberation employed in 'Pharaoh's Dance' and 'Bitches Brew', something he was to take further later that year in his experiments with the wah-wah pedal on *Live Evil*.

These three records of 1969-70 represent a peak in Davis's fluctuating career comparable with the one of 1958-9 which produced *Milestones* and *Kind of Blue*. *Bitches Brew* has probably been the most influential on the development of the jazz-rock stream which it served to define. Columbia were quick to seize on the potential opportunity their star jazzmen had opened up for them; *Bitches Brew* had sold half a million copies in its first year, well in excess of his previous sales. Within the next two years, Shorter and Zawinul had formed Weather Report, Corea Return to Forever, McLaughlin The Mahavishnu Orchestra and Hancock his Headhunters, all signed to the label. As Randy Brecker has argued, the emerging young players had grown up with both rock and jazz: the old separation would never be quite as distinct again.

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WELL, WE certainly had a merry time at *The Wire*'s national relaunch party (any excuse) at London's fashionable Kettner's Restaurant through the generous auspices of Namara/Quartet. Besides the entire *Wire* team, our columnist noted a great many of the magazine's distinguished contributors, including the inimitable Mike Zwerin, on a flying visit from Paris to celebrate the birth of his new book (to be reviewed); most of the people who sell you your jazz records in London; John Stevens, who sat in with Peter Ind's rhythm section for a tune or two; Red Callender, the genial legend who charmed everyone he met (Red's life story *Unfinished Dream*, written in collaboration with Elaine Cohen – also present – will also be reviewed shortly!); Tommy Chase, who shook hands twice with Cook, confirming that they're good mates really; key record spinners Paul Murphy, Baz Fe Jazz, Dean Hume and Andy McConnell (Gilles Peterson was on holiday); and all the usual liggers, smart dressers and mysterious travellers. And Mick Simply Red Hocknall, certified good guy among pop stars. So Mo Houghton says, anyway . . . the *Buzz* desk hears of splendid goings-on already for next year's Camden Jazz Week, which should be staged at the Shaw Theatre. Possibilities include an all-women big band led by Melba Liston, drum events involving Elvin Jones and Art Blakey and lots more (as they say when nothing concrete's been set) . . . Talk about pursuing an obsession. Famed KGB gangbuster Graham Lock, not satisfied with endlessly commanding these pages to write about Anthony Braxton, is now compiling a book after going on the road with AB's band last month. We hear no expenses were spared when it came to rounds of tea in all-night motorway caffs . . . That's about all for this month. Your *Buzz* person will see you all at Joe Henderson's gig and then retire until the New Year. How else can one deal with this Xmas business . . .



ART KEE

Red

BUZZ

Wynton breaks open the codes



SOUNDCHECK

WYNTON MARSALIS

Black Codes (From The Underground)
(CBS 26686)

Recorded: New York, 11 & 14 January 1985.

Black Codes; For Wee Folks; Delfeayo's Dilemma; Phryzzinian Man; Aural Oasis; Chambers of Tain; Blues.

Wynton Marsalis (t); Branford Marsalis (ts, ss); Kenny Kirkland (p); Charnett Moffett (b); Jeff Watts (d); Ron Carter (b on Aural Oasis).

BEHIND THE glinting spectacles and herd-boiled egg head, trapped between lungs, heart and the valves of his trumpet, Wynton Marsalis is something of an Old Testament figure. His steely self-imposed rigour and severity of vision have left him a youthful Abraham sacrificing his own child to an impossibly demanding God. What he has yet to realize is that to approach holiness you don't have to act like a prophet. The cleanliness of his phrasing is self-legitulatory, the distant detail of his lines a bondage, missing the essential grubby simplicity of The Holy, sometimes straying into its close relative: what Peter Brook once referred to (albeit in terms of the theatre) as The Deadly.

The good news is that with *Black Codes* Marsalis shows signs that he is beginning to escape the Deadlines of theology: the gross, numbing secularity of over-exploration that has buried better men than he. Wynton is beginning to address the world in its own terms.

Unlisted on the sleeve, *Black Codes* closes with a 'Blues': the key to the whole album, though by no means its centre. Marsalis and Moffett are alone together, almost casually. These are careful blues, slightly wry, not open enough to suggest that the trumpeter wants to pull down his trousers in public, but they are informal and they are close. Without compromising a whit of dignity, 'Blues' winks and leads you back to the top where the title track squats angrily.

That the record opens with 'Black Codes' is as indicative of Marsalis' cast of mind as it is political. It's a lumpy, portentous composition in which Wynton takes a long lean solo that doesn't seem to go anywhere except back into the folds and flaps of the harmony. Full of little harmonic shifts and cleverness, the posture of the music appears to be what's important to its composer. And though this is the imprint of Marsalis' immaturity, it's a pattern that he breaks out of immediately with 'For Wee Folks', as lovely a tune as never came from the pen of Wayne Shorter. Siding in over Kirkland's broken chords, the two brothers investigate its languor before Branford's soprano surges forward into a spectral loop. For once Wynton's time changes sound organic rather than obstructive and his own solo is a gripping tale of sly tenderness. It's a

telling admission.

'Delfeayo's Dilemma' and 'Phryzzinian Man' occupy the centre of *Black Codes*, both metaphorically and literally. Hot-breathed, both tunes are fired with a genuine collectivity and desire to reach out. The latter, in particular, is remarkably free of struck attitudes and overflows with concentration.

Wynton the chilly aesthete returns with 'Aural Oasis'. The presence of Ron Carter at the bottom of the pool points to a realization of Richard Cook's perceived connection with the surface of *ESP*. However, the improvisations hang a little self-consciously, a little archly, certainly without the primitive 'obsession' that made the Shorter/Devis axis so effectively dark.

Thoughts of the unconscious are swiftly bulldozed, anyway, by the choler of 'Chambers of Tain', Kirkland's tribute to the predictions of his drummer, in which Watts beats the living daylight out of everything in sight and Branford sounds like his man victim. It's awe-inspiring and inconsequential, despite the pianist's attempts to buttress the chaos with some razor-sharp coping, and sums up at a stroke the problems that Marsalis must overcome to match his significance as a musician with music of corresponding substance. One can't help feeling that he would discover the most profound political power of his music if, just for a moment, he let it unfold in its own peace and in its own terms. You don't have to get religion to illuminate The Holy.

Nick Coleman

BILLIE HOLIDAY

The Billie Holiday Songbook
(Verve VVR 7)

Recorded: New York, Los Angeles, Wallingford, Connecticut, 1952-58.
Good Morning Heartache; My Man; Billie's Blues; Don't Explain; Lady Sings The Blues; Lover Man; God Bless The Child; Fine And Mellow; Strange Fruit; Stormy Blues; Trav'lin' Light.

Holiday (v), with various musicians including: Charlie Shavers, Paul Quinichette, Oscar Peterson, Coleman Hawkins, Harry 'Sweets' Edison, Buck Clayton.

CHARLIE PARKER

The Cole Porter Songbook
(Verve VVR 10)

Recorded: New York, 1950-54.

Easy To Love; Begin The Beguine; Night And Day; What Is This Thing Called Love; In The Still Of The Night; I Get A Kick Out Of You; Just One Of Those Things; My Heart Belongs

To Daddy; I've Got You Under My Skin; Love For Sale; I Love Paris.

Parker (as), with various musicians including: Max Roach, Charles Mingus, Walter Bishop, string orchestra and big band conducted by Joe Lippman and Gil Evans.

IF RECORDS like these do nothing else (apart from make money) they call into question the position of the listener – the consumer – with all the insistent cruelty of fingernails on a blackboard. Both albums contain excerpts from *The Decline Of Great Art*, that famous bio-(epic) belied of the lachrymose and the academic, a monument to the jazz necropolis. What you get for your money is a brush with the process of decay.

The *Billie Holiday Songbook* collates ten of the tunes most closely identified with the singer – whether by her own composition or by the simple workings of myth. I find nearly all the Verve recordings from the last ten years of her life excruciating. Faced by the shallow gravel-bottomed well of her voice and the ghostly, half-lit songs she chose to sing, my powers of judgement slip, and in the scrabble to put a distance between myself and the music, I guiltily turn over and over the scale of my voyeurism. How do you approach pain stripped so naked that the mechanisms by which it reaches you – technique, economics, technology – become transparent in their mocking complicity with the very thing that destroyed the woman in the first place? Answer that one and you'll probably enjoy this record immensely.

Similarly, the sad rubble that constitutes the *Bird* album raises awkward questions. Side one is a trip through Parker's pretensions and, by extension, the constrictions he faced as an artist. The string orchestra decorating 'Easy To Love' was no more a real couch for his romantic side than heavy rock grand guignol was a true outlet for Miles Davis's frustrations in the 1970s. The big band sides from 1952 work much better simply because he doesn't have to compromise his natural fire to the softness of the feather bed (Parker always sounds asthmatic to me when coupled with sepulchral strings). Remove the glutinous singers from the Gil Evans octet arrangement of 'In The Still Of The Night' and you have the most inspired and stretching music of the album, with Parker sounding seriously engaged with the business in hand.

Side two is the Cole Porter anthology from 1954 that proved to be the saxophonist's last recording. While it never approaches the egotizing, absurd pathos of the *Dial Lover Man*, this is desperate music. Shakily phrased, sore-toned and displaying painfully approximate tuning in places, this is music that should be remembered for what it signifies and forgotten for its substance.

No amount of cute packaging will disguise that fact.

Nick Coleman

**DENNIS GONZALEZ
JOHN PURCELL
OCTET**

Little Toot
(Daagmim 13)

Recorded: Dallas, 8 April 1985.

Hymn For Rivers;
Simultaneously Due; Dos
Cosas; Hear Our Prayer;
Little Toot.

Gonzalez (t, figh, tabla);
Purcell (ts, ss, as, f, oboe);
Jim Sangrey (ts), Rob
Blakeslee (t, figh); Bob
Ackerman (as, bs, f, cl); Pat
Peterson (v); Henry Franklin
(b); W.A. Richardson
(d).

AH, THIS is something good! I hear hundreds of new records every year, but the strain to be new tells on so many of them that it tells on me too. Play me something fresh, you cets. Little Toot does it.

Gonzalez has organized this session with an ingenious ear for detail and nuance as well as molten drive. This octet is a grippingly fluent, protean ensemble that finds invention in every turning of a very fine set of compositions. "Hear Our Prayer" starts with nothing but Peterson's voice, slides inexorably into an urgent tenor declamation by Purcell and thickens into a yearning wail of horn voices that's 'gospel' without any hammy emotion. "Hymn For Rivers", a dedication to Sam, palpitates with excitement. Tenor and rhythm snuff funkily below a slow, stately, noble horn unison, leading to the bright sparkle of Ackerman's flute, the spare remarks of Gonzalez's muted trumpet and a chaotic but thrilling slugfest for the two tenors. Magnificent.

Purcell's "Simultaneously Due" bleeds trumpet, oboe and voice into a more considered but no less urgent lycra fold, and the traditional Mexican tune "Dos Cosas" is actually less Mariachi than a round-trip ticket from Kingston through Tijuana to Dallas. Here the sconing introduces baritone and alto for a fresh palette of colours. And always Franklin and Richardson are thoughtful and enormously strong beneath. Listen to the treble shifting of accents they work up on the title tune.

Purcell aside – we know him from DeJochette's New Edition – none of these players is well-known. They suggest that the unlikely outpost of Dallas, TX is harbouring some important new music. This is record number 13 on Gonzalez's Daagmim label – somebody should be importing what's obviously a valuable enterprise. Write to them at 1127 N. Clinton, Dallas TX 75208 USA.

Richard Cook

LONNIE MACK

Strike Like Lightning
(Sonet SNTF 935)

Recorded: Austin, Texas –
1984.

Hound Dog Man; Satisfy
Suave; Stop; Long Way From
Memphis; Double Whammy;
Strike Like Lightning;
Falling Back In Love With
You; If You Have To Know;
You Ain't Got Me; Oreo
Cookie Blues.
Lonnie Mack (g, v); Billy
McIntosh (g); Stevie Ray

Vaughan (g); Stan Szelest
(p); Tim Drummond (b);
Dennis O'Neal (d); Gene
Lawson (d).

AS LONNIE Mack points out in "Long Way From Memphis", it's over twenty years since he crashed the American charts with his trend-setting instrumental version of Chuck Berry's "Memphis Tennessee". Since then, he and his vintage Gibson Flying V guitar have been through changes, recording r&b, rock and country end even quitting the professional scene in disgust for a few years. Fortunately, a spell with Ronnie Hawkins' band in 1982 got his creative juices back in motion (his contribution to Hawkins' *Legend In His Spermatime* LP is notable), and now Chicago's leading blues label Alligator have lured the greybeard guitarist back into the studio.

Fronting a big, beefy and balanced band whose most outstanding component is pianist Stan Szelest, Lonnie positively rampages through a set of mainly original songs. His voice redolent of the hard knocks of life, his guitar hard, fluent and vivid, he makes a meal of the up-tempo tunes such as "Double Whammy", a remake of his '64 instrumental hit "Wham!", or "Long Way From Memphis" which chronicles his life and hard times since that first hit. But his virtuosity is equally apparent on the three-guitar acoustic "Oreo Cookie Blues" or on the slow, moody blues of "Falling Back In Love With You", on which Szelest's piano takes a beautifully paced solo.

Indeed, Szelest's contribution to the success of this LP is considerable. Deceptively relaxed, delightfully approximate, he's at his best on the title track where, over the riff to Bobby Perker's "Watch Your Step", he alternately tickles and assaults the keyboard with skill and enthusiasm.

The least that can be said of this album is that it's 40 minutes of fine modern r&b. The best thing that can be said of it is that it doesn't matter one jot that Lonnie Mack is white – he's an outstanding blues guitarist, captured here at his peak.

Mike Atherton



MEL TORME

The Duke Ellington & Count

Basie Songbooks

(Verve 823 248)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 12
December 1960 & 2 February
1961.

I'm Gonna Go Fishin'; Don't
Get Around Much Anymore;
I Like The Sunrise; Take The
A Train; Reminisicn' In
Tempo; Juat A Sittin' And A

Rockin'; Down For Double;
I'm Gonna Move To The
Outskirts Of Town; Blue And
Sentimental; Oh What A
Night For Love; Sent For
You Yesterday; In The
Evening (When The Sun
Goes Down).

Torme (v); with orchestra
conducted by Johnny
Mandel.

THE FIRST words Mel sings are "Woke up this momm", but it's no harbinger of a blues collection. This is a straight reissue of *I Dig The Duke, I Dig The Count*, Johnny Mandel's arrangements of two sets of Ellington and Basie tunes, and despite a few ordinary high-steppers it's often tremendous Torme. He always insists on the craft of singing – no exhaustive I-live-every-line tragedy, no force of melodrama. Torme is the most detailed of singers, each word thoughtfully turned over and out, but somehow he projects the whole song, not a syllable breakdown.

The Ellington side is the better of the two, if only for "Reminisicn' In Tempo". Torme himself wrote the lyric for this elegantly crestfallen melody, and his treatment is moonlit with melancholy – a postlude to a kiss, perhaps. But it's impossible to feel down for long when Torme's singing – he finds a lush joy in "Just A Sittin' And A Rockin'" as easily as he flips through "Down For Double" – and these are songs about lost love! He doesn't have the throb authority of Jimmy Rushing in "Sent For You Yesterday" or the slyness of Joe Williams for "In The Evening". These are blues too black for Torme's debonair suppleness. The airy swing he finds, though, is enough to infect Mandel's sometimes cumbersome approximations of the masters. The music runs in a very happy groove.

Richard Cook

CHEVALIER
BROTHERS

Live And Jumping

(Disques Chevalier GG 1)

Recorded: Twickenham &
Camden Town, 2/3 March 1985.

Five Guys Named Moe; Reet
Petite And Gone; Fat Sam
From Birmingham; Almairl
Special; Self Inflicted; The
Joint Is Jumping; The Jam
Man; One More Drink
Bartender; Wake Up Baby.
Raymond Gelato (ts, v);
Maurice Chevalier (g, v);
Roger Beaujolais (vib, v);
Clark Kent (b, v); John Pipper
(d).

THE JUXTAPOSITIONS inspired by the well-ordered shelves of the vinyl junkie can be very illuminating. This album stashed away right next to Charlie Christian. I'm sure the 'Brothers' would be entertained by that. Their music is wholly derivative of the jive era. As Slim Gaillard testifies in his sleeve note they "sound like some of the cats I used to work with down on 52nd Street – Louis Jordan, Lionel Hampton ...". He doesn't mention Christian but the debt is clear in each solo Maurice the guitarist plays, and I doubt he'd be embarrassed by my saying so.

After all, Chevalier Brothers aren't passing themselves off as anything original. They'd

say they're celebrating the music of an era they love. But 'homage' music is of dubious value unless invested with some of the player's personality. The Brothers play "The Joint Is Jumping", they play "Airmail Special" and they swing with them too; but unlike, say, George Melly, who does a similar job on a similar era, they have no musical individuality. This may be down to the fact that though most of their set, to judge by this album, is song-based, they haven't really got a singer. Just a sax player who's prepared to give it a go.

On the other hand it is a live album and I've been listening to it alone in my armchair. The sound quality is not scintillating but, at times, it does exude a kind of aurel sweat that suggests the Chevaliers in person could be a different proposition.

Steve Lewis

ART PEPPER

Art Pepper + Eleven:
Modern Jazz Classics
(Boplicity/Contemporary
COP 007)

Recorded: Los Angeles,
March 14 and 28, May 12
1959.

Move, Groovin' High, Opus
de Funk, 'Round Midnight,
Four Brothers, Shawnuff;
Bernie's Tune, Walkin'
Shoes, Anthropology,
Alreigin, Walkin', Donna Lee.
Art Pepper (as, ts, cl); Marty
Paich (arr); Pete Candoli, Al
Porcino (t); Jack Sheldon (t);
Dick Nash (tb); Bob
Enevoldsen (ts, tb); Vince de
Rosa (Fr horn); Bud Shank,
Charlie Kennedy, Herb
Geller (as); Richie Kamuca,
Bill Perkins (ts); Med Flory
(bs); Russ Freeman (p); Joe
Mondragon (b); Mel Lewis
(d). (Collective personnel).

ART PEPPER is not currently under-represented on record, but with reissues as fine as this one it cannot be said that there's a glut either. It is instructive to compare this album with Gil Evans's *New Bottle Old Wine* recorded at around the same time (1959) and featuring Cannonball Adderley in re-workings of jazz classics (elbent mostly from pre-bop eras). The overwhelming interest in the latter case is in Evans's recompositions of the material, which are let down by the presence of a soloist of Adderley's limited stylistic and emotional range. In *Modern Jazz Classics*, on the other hand, the interest lies primarily in the work of the soloist, and as a showcase for this Marty Paich's arrangements perform creditably. Where the latter attempt to move more in the direction of Gil Evans-style recomposition, as in the over-blown treatment of 'Round Midnight', they are less successful.

There are few solos by other members of the band, but the album is notable for a number of excursions by Art on instruments other than his principal alto. On the beguiling arrangement of "Walkin'" (as on a couple of other tracks) he plays tenor and shows how, in the words of one worthy constituent, he is a 'master of the blues'. And most intriguingly and attractively, on "Anthropology" Pepper gives us a solitary taste of his limpid clarinet-playing. Like another saxophonist and musical forbear, Lester Young, on the relatively rare occasions when he picked up a clarinet

Pepper constructed more engaging solos than many a front-rank clarinet specialist – despite or perhaps because of his comparatively lesser technical expertise on that instrument. We hear him passionate alto on the faster numbers, which include an impressive "Shawnuff" taken by the band at an exacting tempo.

One is reminded of Lester Young in a different way on "Move". Pepper's solo on tenor on this track contains (unsurprisingly) stylistic reminders of Young's work; invidious comparisons with the account of the Denzil Best number on Miles Davis's *Birth of the Cool* sessions from ten years previously is inevitable, however. The Lester Young echo is to the point, for paradoxically the later version would sound to the pure musical understanding as if it were from an earlier era.

But the comparison is invidious. For what we are provided with on *Art Pepper + Eleven* is superior white West Coast jazz lifted from the level of the merely worthy by the presence of one of the finest practitioners of the saxophonist's craft.

Andy Hamilton

HANK MOBLEY

Another Workout
(Blue Note BST 84431)

Recorded: 26 March 1961 &
5 December 1961.

Out Of Joe's Bag; I Should
Care; Gettin' And Jettin';
Hank's Other Soul; Hello
Young Lovers; Three Coins
In A Fountain.
Mobley (ta); Paul Chambers
(b); Wynton Kelly (p); Philly
Joe Jones (d).

RATHER SUDDENLY, there seems to be lot of Mobley's music available again. This is an addendum to the cult classic trio of *Soul Station*, *Roll Call* and *Workout*, the final tune being an outtake from that last date (purportedly with Grant Green, but I can't hear a single twang). The round sound is calmly on



its mettle. Hank saunters through these themes – Jones hernies the beat, but the tenorman won't be drawn. In "Hello Young Lovers" he pecks out the melody and sparingly, sagely turns up the heat for his solo. This is gentlemanly jazz.

The sound is somehow denser on "Three Coins"; Kelly and Chambers weave closer and closer to the tenor. What Mobley plays in "Gettin' And Jettin'" is a beg of Blue Note blues licks coloured by his own diffident sensibility: there's no real drive, just a patient

phrasing of rhythms that would be aggressive in any other horn. So what he tells us here is really no more upbeat than the story of "I Should Care". And he treats that shoulder-shrugging ballad with wistful gaiety. Mobley's music of this time comes to us through a mesh, an imitable fatalism that this fine player shaped to quiet, unique ends.

Richard Cook

GRANT GREEN

Born To Be Blue

(Blue Note BST 84432)

Recorded: 1 March 1962,
and 23 December 1961.

Someday My Prince Will
Come; Born To Be Blue; If I
Should Lose You; Back In
Your Own Backyard; My One
And Only Love; Count Every
Star.

Grant Green (g); Ike Quebec
(ts); Sonny Clark (p); Sam
Jones (b); Louis Hayes (d).

THE GUITAR is the least accessible improvising voice in the jazz instrumental canon because it has the least vocal characteristics: thus runs the ancient brownfurring homily. Despite its gibberish, I'm inclined to swallow this one – at least in part. Too often I've lost vital contact with a guitarist because of the textural/tonal limitations of the instrument, the relative reliance on pattern in note selection. Montgomery, Christian and certain Free players have inspired awe, but lamentably few others have touched me where it hurts – with one exception.

Grant Green has a singular tone. Both glistening fragile and dirty, the duality of his playing tugs you in, attracted by the combination of vulnerability and soul-fingered strength. The lines he draws are lengthy and flexible, rarely sounding constricted by the harmony that ties knots in so many of his brethren. To free himself, he is quite able to sidle sideways into (harmonically approximate) whooping onomatopoeia – check the first of his two brilliant solos on "Count Every Star"; carried over, incidentally, from Quebec's *Blue And Sentimental*.

Born To Be Blue was recorded only a couple of months after that venerable classic. It may not shimmer with the same restrained passion or sound as rhythmically inventive (Sam Jones and Hayes – capable as they are – do not explore the nooks and crannies of possibility with the same flair as Chambers and Philly Joe), but it is none the less a delightfully twinkle-toed exhibition.

Perhaps observing leadership protocol, Quebec is not so expansively domineering as on the earlier date, preferring to dovetail and contrast with Green in a light-textured weave of sound (images of playful bullocks end snakes spring to mind: interpret them as you will). Nevertheless, the tenorman's contributions are uniformly constructive, bulging with humour and, of course, devilish swing. Green is magnificent throughout; best perhaps on "Count Every Star", but equally breath-catching with his single-note inscription of the bellad "My One And Only Love" and the mordent drive of "If I Should Lose You". The mighty Clark also picks out one of his small masterpieces on the same tune, to add to his sensitive coming.

Altogether, a crisply sparkling little adventure. My only objection concerns tune selection end is, therefore, a matter of taste. I have always found the title track "Someday

My Prince Will Come" and "Back In Your Own Backyard" (particularly) to be loathsome melodies; but that, as they say, is my problem.

Nick Coleman

THE BREAKFAST BAND

Water's Edge

(*Making Waves* SPIN 501)

Recorded: **The Bull & Gate**, London — 1985.

That's The One; Hugo's Song; Water's Edge; Batter Loco; Who Do You Think You Are?; Taking Some Time; Belize Breeze; Kinetic Soca.

Paul Bruce (b); Richard Bailey (d, bongos, steel pan, timbales, perc); Tony Maronie (bongos, congas, perc); Darren Abraham (perc, d); Winston Delandro (g); Hugo Delmi (kbds); Dave Defries (t); Tim Whitehead (ts, ss).

Keiko

Bailey, Maronie, Abraham only.

PAZ

Look Inside

(*Coda CODA 18*)

Recorded: no details given. AC/DC; Crave E Canela; One Hundred; Sunny Day;

Making Smiles; Bags; Look Inside; Three Blonde Mice; Night Bird.

Dick Crouch; Ray Warleigh (as, ss, t, picc); Geoff Castle (p, el-p, synths); Jim Mullen (eg); Henry Thomas (bg); Joao Bosco De Oliveira (v, timbales, Brazilian perc).

DUB SYSTEM

Tunes From The Missing

Channel

(On-U Sound ON-ULP38)

Recorded: Southern Studios, London; Berry St., London; Studio Prisme, Lausanne, Switzerland — 1985.

Ravi Shankar Pt. 1; The Show Is Coming; Must Be Dreaming; Over Board; Forever More; Geoffrey Boycott; Weille; Jolly; Out And About.

Evar (b); Lizard (b); Jah Wobble (b, kbds); Martin Frederik (b, g); Ashanti Roy (g); Keith Levene (g); Kishi (kbds); Steve Beresford (kbds); Nick Plytas (kbds); Bonjo I (perc); Fats (v); Blm Sherman (v); Style Scott (d); Melodica Doctor Pablo (p) (collective personnel).

WITH BOP tagged as a discipline (embrace or avoid to taste accordingly), it falls on us to examine Fusion. Which also shows little signs of going away, with far less reason to be sticking around. From The Breakfast Band,

more skill than sense, unimpeachable technique embedded in gleaming bobsleigh rhythms, all corners taken fast or flashily. All "Latin" or "Caribbean" or "African" flourishes patted down into airless elevator suitability, desperate enthrallment. Reelly, Water's Edge does not invite repeated listening or loving analysis. Son and Cadence and Salsa, grity and loopy and wild musics all, continue to have their reputations treduced by this nonsense.

That said, the sound taken to its anonymous streamlined extreme can become oddly tenacious (as those of us entranced by Level 42 will willingly testify); there may still not be much substance, but Paz bring a breathless and lightning-facedlessness to their silky velocity that actually makes something of its borrowed shapes. An idiom that must realize it's squandered its moment; but where The Breakfast Band are intolerably smug about the chops, brash and forgettable (the kind of people with *Keep Music Live* plastered over everything except their repertoire), Paz make Fusion an attractive and relaxing backwater.

There is another face to fusion, these days. That spreads its curving all ways, carving chunks out of Africa and Indie, Hip-Hop and Harmolodics, nodding towards Can on one side and Sir Coxson Dodd on the other, with a greedy love that defies respect as much as it admits it, that steals where it sees value or need. Not really fusion at all, nor yet discipline. Bill Laswell's one exponent, and he calls it Collision. Adrian Sherwood's another. He knows it's Dub.

Dub is deconstruction. Literally, with tunes pummelled to pieces, fragments thrown into odd prominence, surfacing, sinking. And strategically, with the presiding producer-composer-mixmusician flexing his conflicting powers to force sound into transitions. Sherwood is a nervy young Briton with a taste for huge noise inside a skanking backbeat, and a convincing knowledge of the innovations of his Jamaican predecessors: he's acted as rogue deskman to many of the odder names in reggae from the thick rasp of the late Prince Far I to the near perfect lit of Bim Sherman. Tunes . . . is a dark and disturbing joke of a record, with mild atmospherics ("Ravi Shankar Pt. 1") and light tunes ("Jolly") systematically attacked from behind. Brutal juxtapositions and a logical yammer make for a constant cross-jamming of cultural airwaves — but where fusion used to make of this a glib partytrick, dub is obsessive in its murky depth, comical in its cosmopolitan erudition. His cast of musicians sacrifice their starsheen to the mix, to find another more satisfying glamour as they whir round one another.

This music still has no critical grammar, still toes no lines except basslines, is ridiculously inventive, exciting, emotional, frantically thoughtful, deafening and desolate. All at once, dubwise.

Mark Sinker

TED CURSON

Live At La Tete De L'Art (Can-Am CA1700)

Recorded: Montreal, 1962.

Cracklin' Bread; Ted's Tempo; Playhouse March; Straight Ice; Quicksand; Curson (t); Al Doctor (as); Maury Kaye (p); Charles Biddle (b); Charles Duncan (d).

UNLIKE OTHER records in the Can-Am series, this is actually a reissue, although the original LP is so obscure as to be virtually unknown. Cut in a tiny Montreal club, the music is monochromatic but quite confident. Doctor menege to sound rather ham-fistedly modern, with a blaring timbre that reminds of Emile Henry, and the rhythm players are stonily solid. "Straight Ice" starts out hefty and ends up with the group frudging through mud. But Curson plays a long solo here that passes in and out of tradition quite daringly. Through the medium of a fat, brassy tone he mingles phrases that might have been played on a slow bop blues with much more contemporary esades.

LIVE AT LA TETE DE L'ART

TED CURSON



In "Quicksand", too, the trumpet is unpredictable: long notes that brush with atonalism and lend an impressionistic air to the music which — when followed by the alto's artless remarks — create a vague premonition of Coleman's Golden Circle work. There are interesting fragments that like all over the place, although they never come long enough to make the set really grip. A diverting footnote.

Richard Cook

ANDREW POPPY

The Beating Of Wings

(Zang Tuum Tumb ZTT 1Q5)

Recorded: London, presumably — perhaps in 1985.

Cadenza.

Poppy (p); Glynn Perrin (el p).

Listening In.

Bruce Nockles (t); Jack Hughes (g) added; Perrin absent.

The Object Is A Hungry Wolf.

Geoff Warren (fl); Roger Heston (cl); Rory Allam (b cl); Andy Blake (ss, as, bs);

Elizabeth Perry, Gillian Cohen, Ann Morfee, Julia Frape, Andrew Roberts (vn); Jocelyn Pook, Sally Beamish (vla); Alexandra Robinson, Ingrid Perrin,

Justin Pearson (cello); Mary Phillips, Elise Lorraine (v); Nockles, Hughes absent.

32 Frames For Orchestra.

Nockles, Simon Ferguson, Edward Hobart (t); Paul Nieman, Roger Williams (tb);

David Cox, Andrew Antcliff; Phillip Eastop (fr h); David Powell (tu); Nancy Ruffer, Simon Channing (fl);

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Victoria Soames (cl); Heaton (cl, b cl); John Harle (ss); Dave Roach (as); Andy Flindon (bs); David Owen (p); Poppy (p, cond); Glynn Matthews (vb); Keith Bartlett (xy); Perry, Cohen, Roberts, Teresa Ward, Jonathan Rees, Cathy Adams, Mark Berrow, Margaret Rosebery, Pauline Dowbury, Fiona Higham, Jane Carwardine (vn); Yuko Inove, Rupert Bawden, Rebecca Wade (vla); Susan Dorey, Matthias Felle, Sara Gilford, Rhydian Shaxson (cello); Judith Kleinman, Sarah Haynes (b); John Lunn (b, bg).

BESIDES DABBING with pop ("played guitar in a rock band", says the press release), Poppy has involved himself in several other kinds of music. His works include "Elvis Revenged", "But Does Winston Own A Straw Hat?" and other things, yet he is probably best known for his participation in The Lost Jockey ensemble in the early 80s. After which "Cadenze" is disappointing, an exercise in minimalist conventions with nothing personal about it. "Listening In" is more original if not more enjoyable. Listening to it is a bit like being in a factory while the machines keep doing the same things over and over, but there are some unusual effects from guitar and percussion.

ANDREW POPPY

The Beating of Wings

"The Object" starts like an accomplished imitation of Philip Glass — "The Photographer", perhaps — yet pale and less memorable. It continues that way, too, except that occasionally the music turns aside, makes an unexpected gesture of its own, then retreats back into the Glasshouse. "32 Frames", on the other hand, begins like an early Kurt Weill piece, but the memorable tune never arrives. The promising yet unfurling accompaniment goes on end on, and the composition in fact turns into quite a good anthology of accompanimental figures, eventually using several at once.

Mex Harrison

FREDDIE HUBBARD

Here To Stay

(Blue Note BST 84135)

Recorded: 27 December

1962, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Philly Mignon; Father And Son; Body And Soul; Nostrand And Fulton; Full Moon And Empty Arms;

Assunta.

Hubbard (t); Wayne Shorter (ts); Cedar Walton (p); Reggie Workman (b); Philly Joe Jones (d).

FREDDIE HUBBARD has always been a bracing soloist, but very often his best work is found on albums where he is a sideman rather than a leader. This is as equally true of the burgeoning young blood of the early 60s as it was of the crossover star of the 70s and early 80s. His work for Blue Note, however, is probably the most satisfactory block of recordings under his own name; it was not until his move to Atlantic in the late 60s that he began to indulge in commercial projects such as *Backlash* that became depressingly frequent as his career unfolded.

Here To Stay was in fact gone tomorrow; recorded some ten or so weeks after *Hubtones*, it was scheduled for release in 1963 complete with a Reid Miles cover, but never actually issued. The reason is probably some minor blemishes of articulation by both Hubbard and Shorter in some ensemble and solo passages. In spite of this, *Here To Stay* could stake a claim for one of Hubbard's best Blue Note sessions, if only for his crackling solo on "Philly Mignon" and a superior interpretation of "Body And Soul". With the exception of Philly Joe, all were playing together with Art Blakey at the time, which clearly contributes to the relaxed feel the session generates, particularly on two Cal Massey compositions — "Father and Son" and the modal "Assunta".

Wayne Shorter at this time was absorbing Coltrane's influence and on this outing was a lunging, straight-ahead soloist swept on by Hubbard's exuberance. The rhythm section, not surprisingly, is dominated by Philly Joe, although not to the extent sleeve writer Peter Keepnews suggests when he refers to him urging Hubbard on to "almost orgasmic levels of intensity". The turn on is, of course, Hubbard's exceptional command of the trumpet which he never holds in reserve. As on practically all his work there are those moments when his playing becomes musclebound, and while he is powerful he is not always tasteful — this trait surfaces on "Nostrand And Fulton". But then Hubbard's playing has always demanded you take it — warts and all.

Stuart Nicholson

ART PEPPER

**Intensity
(Boplicity/Contemporary COP010)**

Recorded: Los Angeles — 23, 25 November 1960.

I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me; I Love You; Come Rain Or Come Shine; Long Ago and Far Away; Gone With the Wind; I Wished On The Moon; Too Close For Comfort; Pepper (as); Dolo Coker (p); James Bond (b); Frank Butler (d).

ART FARMER

**On The Road
(Boplicity/Contemporary COP009)**

Recorded: Los Angeles — 26,

28 July 1976.

I Can't Get Started; Namely You; My Funny Valentine; Downwind.

Farmer (fl h); Hampton Hawes (p); Art Pepper (as); Ray Brown (b); Steve Ellington (d).

Recorded: Los Angeles — 16 August 1976.

What Am I Here For?; Will You Still Be Mine?

Shelly Manne (d) replaces Ellington.

THE INTENSITY LP was recorded just a month after Pepper's *Smack Up*, which found him improvising on such diverse pieces as Duane Tatro's "Maybe Next Year" and Ornette Coleman's "Tears Inside". Here the programme is much less varied and looks like a belated collection, a suspect convention of that time. Actually, most of the items are taken at a carefully chosen variety of fast tempos and the narrow range of this initial material serves to emphasize some of the most valuable aspects of the altoist's work at this time. In particular he is shown to be an outstanding melodist.

Other musicians have made this kind of popular song the vehicle of strong emotion, but Pepper's treatments here stand as almost classic demonstrations of the process. With a seeming casualness that is altogether deceptive, the phrasing is redistributed in a more interesting, indeed more musical, way; the whole pace of each melody is changed and its inner tension heightened while the bogus romantic overtones vanish. (Pepper would never, I think, have stopped in mid-performance, as Lester Young is reported once to have done, because, he said, "I've forgotten the words".)

All that is a good start, yet still better is the insight with which Pepper explores the expressive potential of these significantly modified thematic phrases. One listens fascinated because his melodic invention is such that he does not, even once, fall back on rhythmically activated arpeggio filling-maternal — on mechanically running the changes. His developments always have their own kind of linear beauty and logic. "Come Rain Or Come Shine" demonstrates the whole process in slow motion. Pepper benefits from Butler's splendid drumming — hear the fours on "I Love You", for example. But the chief weak link on these several Contemporary sessions of his was usually the pianist, and it has to be said that Coker, like Wynton Kelly and Pete Jolly before him, is duly predictable.

It is less easy to decide what is wrong with Farmer's LP. I have coupled it with *Intensity* because of Pepper's presence on four tracks. His contributions do not influence the character of the music so much as might be expected, however, though some of what he plays is more cogent than most of the rest of what is going on. Normally I enjoy Farmer's work a great deal, but this sort of relaxed, open-ended blowing session was never the best setting for him. Even on pieces to which he normally would make a good response, such as "My Funny Valentine", he rambles without direction and without producing an overall shape. Admittedly this track and "I Can't Get Started" are the worst; but one or two of the other pieces, like Hawes's "Downwind", are clearly unsatisfactory. And Hewes's own playing is more diffuse than it

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was in the 50s and 60s. Nor does Ellington seem the right drummer: things perk up a bit on the two August tracks.

Max Harrison

PHILIP GLASS

Satyagraha
(CBS Masterworks 13M 39672)
Recorded: New York, 1985.
Vocal text from the
Bhagavad-Gita by
Constance de Jong. The
New York City Opera,
Orchestra and Chorus,
Christopher Keen, director.
Produced by Kurt Munkacsy
and Michael Riesman.
Douglas Perry (ten, Gandhi);
Claudia Cummings (sop,
Miss Schlesien); Rhonda
Liss (alt, Kasturba and Mrs
Alexander); Robert
McFarland (bari, Mr
Kallenbach and Prince
Arjuna); Sherryl Woods
(sop, Mrs Naidoo); Scott
Reeve (bass, Parsi Rustomji
and Lord Krishna).

SATYAGRAHA was commissioned and premiered in 1980 by the people of Rotterdam, a city with a strong modern association with liberty. One of its great landmarks is Osip Zackine's sculpture of a figure bent by repression but not weighed down, rather turned into a powerfully resistant curve of energy, like a drawn bow. 'The Destroyed City' provides a dramatic image of Gandhi's belief in the strength of passive resistance.

That belief was developed during Gandhi's time as a young barrister in South Africa in the last years of the 19th century and under British imperial rule. Later, Gandhi was to read the American Henry David Thoreau's essay 'Civil Disobedience', which provided him with a ready shorthand for his movement's chief principle and method. Other influences included the work and life of Tolstoy, art critic John Ruskin's *Unto This Land* and, pre-eminently, the epic poem *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Just as it was the British who, in South Africa, had devised the concentration camp, so it was British imperial officials who administered the racist Three Pound Tax and the Asian Immigration Three Pound Tax (a precedent which provides a context for current squeamishness - officially 'realism' - regarding action against apartheid). These 'Black Arts' effectively removed the civil rights of free Indian workers whose indentures had been served. The economic problem these people posed the British authorities quickly acquired a political and social dimension: immigration was banned, free movement restricted, arbitrary taxes collected and, most wounding, only Christian marriages permitted, a foretaste of the contemporary Dutch Free Church's splendidly pharisaical definition of 'immorality'.

At his settlement Tolstoy Farm and through the pages of the newspaper *Indian Opinion*, Gandhi gradually developed the lineaments of a practical version of Thoreau's ideas, the 'truth-force' of Satyagraha. The climax of the movement came with a long march into Natal where black miners were being racially taxed out of existence. Gandhi led the Satyagrahi army to the illegal Transvaal border where thousands were arrested, provoking a

sympathetic strike by the Newcastle miners. The authorities were swamped by unresisting protesters; the alternative to the intolerable burden of imprisoning them all was to let them go and to guarantee the prolonging and snowballing of the strike.

Gandhi's method quickly revealed its perfect tactical logic, though he found it hard to persuade many of his followers to call off the strike and march at the threshold of success in the interests of a wider strategic and philosophic purity. Gandhi's obsession with practicalities is apt to be hidden behind the metaphor of *Satyagraha*.

Philip Glass's opera shows a near-perfect coincidence between ideas and musical form. It is, in many regards, a technical and artistic middle point between the austerity of Einstein *On The Beach*, his collaboration with Robert Wilson, scored for the Glass Ensemble, and the lush, softer orchestration of *The Photographer*. Though it is still Michael Riesman's keyboard line which dominates, *Satyagraha* is scored for relatively conventional orchestral forces: woodwinds in threes, strings, organ, no brass or percussion. Glass took the step (still unusual in opera) of overdubbing rather than splicing together successive takes. With conventional opera, some immediacy might thus be lost; with a work of such uniform and subtle dynamics as *Satyagraha*, however, it may have been a necessity.

Clearly what is lost, even in a recording of this quality, is the overall impact of the staging. The broadcast of *Satyagraha* by Channel 4 (who are by way of becoming the Philip Glass channel) gave only a poor sense of the visual impact of the set. Ironically, conventional opera survives rather better on disc since the narrative pace is so slow and so insistently underlined. On *Satyagraha*, dramatic movement within each scene is almost subliminal, in keeping with Glass's tendency towards harmonic stasis and repetition. His scenes are presented as tableaux, with the silent figures of Tolstoy, Rabindranath Tagore and Martin Luther King Jr in successive acts set high above the performers. Images such as the Indian wheel doubled in Robert Israel's set design as the rotary side of the Indian Opinion printing press.

The Sanskrit libretto, by Constance de Jong from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, is syllabic and non-legato, a vocal match for Glass's static harmony. The music does not invite the kind of expressionistic verication called for in conventional operatic aria, but rather a cooler, less emotional repetition. The whole opera, in this end other ways, works against the conventions. The story is, of course, thoroughly non-erotic and deals precisely with the suspension of what might normally be conceived as the will. In that regard, it is far removed from Mozart or Wagner.

Just as women played a vital role in Gandhi's movement, so in *Satyagraha* it is they who take the more dynamic vocal parts. Arguably the most conventionally dramatic moment in the whole work comes at the beginning of Act II when the European Mrs Alexander (sung by Rhonda Liss) bravely defends Gandhi from a hostile crowd in Durban. By and large, though, the opera is as bereft of dramatic conflict as Glass's music is of harmonic conflict. The effect is almost as if the Wagnerian *Leitmotif* had become not just a dramatic device within the structure, but the structure itself.

What could be called - in the most positive sense - the 'feminization' of political will

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comes across strongly with Gandhi himself, sung superbly by the high tenor Douglas Perry. (In Akhnaten, with its related view of self, history and sexuality, Glass uses a counter-tenor.) Perry's voice blends perfectly with those of the women in Gandhi's life, his wife Kasturbai (also sung by Rhonda Lisa), Mrs Naidoo (soprano Sherryl Woods) and his Scottish secretary Sonja Schlesien (soprano Claudia Cummings). In contrast the more conventionally optimistic men in the movement, Mr Kallenbach and Parsi Rustomji are sung by the very lowest voices, baritone Robert McFarland and bass Scott Reeves, who in the mythological opening scene have sung Prince Arjuna and the Lord Krishna, figures from the Bhagavad-Gita. Gandhi, as the vocal colour hints, has moved away from this aggressively male cosmological viewpoint towards something sweeter and quieter. His closing passage, with his comrades asleep around him, is a superbly lyrical affirmation of rebirth and joy.

What one thinks of Satyagraha almost inevitably depends on a view of the ideas it expresses. The doctrine of non-violence and passive resistance is scarcely a Western one and its musical counterpart in Glass's use of un-hierarchical structures is a long way from Western conventions. It would be tempting to claim that Satyagraha is not – despite its subtitle – opera at all, but a devotional piece scored for voices (in a dead language). Yet, as I've tried to suggest, Glass plays with many of the conventions of opera in an attempt to overturn them and the sexual and social ideas underlying them. Seen thus, Satyagraha is more a subversive piece than its programme might otherwise suggest.

Gandhi's career – and that of Martin Luther King, third of the opera's presenting presences – quickly underlined the limits of non-violence and of principles accommodation and compromise. "If you are slain/paradise is yours/and if you gain the victory/yours is the earth to enjoy" seems a cunctious philosophy with which to inspire or beguile the dispossessed or downtrodden. Gandhi's assimilation to Western values – substantially Christian ideas – led directly to the political dynasty that ironically but accurately bears his name, and which has overseen the neutering and violence of modern India; political oscillation between East and West; the State of Emergency; the scandals and death of Sanjay; the assassination of Indira; and the present, ambiguous reign of Rajiv. Many of those ambiguities lie dormant in Glass's Gandhi.

Brian Morton

CHARLES MINGUS SEXTET

Concertgebouw Amsterdam
April 10th 1964.

(Ulysse Musique AROC
50506/7)

Recorded: Amsterdam, 10
April 1964.

Ow; So Long Eric;

A.T.F.W.U.S.A.: Orange Was
The Colour Of Her Dress

Then Blue Silk; Meditation

On A Pair Of Wire Cutters.

Johnny Coles (t); Eric

Dolphy (as, f, bs clt); Clifford

Jordan (ts); Jaki Byard (p);

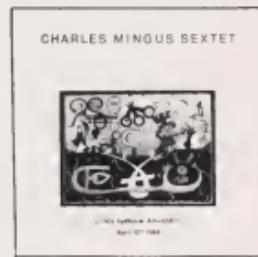
Mingus (b); Dannie

Richmond (d).

AS HISTORY – which Mingus always

despised – throws his work into sharper relief, it seems that one of the things which died with him was jazz's sense of unholy danger. Jazz 'passion' seems so polite these days. Compared with the omnia spirit at work here, it's tame. Only Sun Ra can invoke these sort of demons, and he's grown old.

It's the more peculiar that the underlying belligerence which never really leaves this set, even though much of the music is jaunty or even charming, should infect such an amiable collective. Eric Dolphy, that sweet man; the soft-speaking Coles; the uncertain Jordan; the rollicking Byard. Mingus blackens their efforts into a jazz of turbulence and sometimes despair. The unisons of "Orange Was The Colour" and "Wire Cutters", as well as "So Long Eric" – all have the flavour of mournful agitation which the bassist kept close to his heart.



This recording seems to be a new discovery, although several sets from the 1964 European tour have been released, notably in *The Great Concert of Charles Mingus* (Prestige), recorded nine days later. This set is blotchy recorded and none of the horns comes through with any clarity, but there is excellent playing in the kind of lurching, caralass manner of every Mingus band after the *East Coasting* unit. Dolphy is at his most extreme in "So Long Eric", pitching his patented intervallic leaps until his solo sas-saws into something like a sonic vamp. Against such mastery, wimpy minor figures like Coles and Jordan seem dwarfed, although they offer a sort of pinched enthusiasm to compensate. Byard, meanwhile, obliviously goes on his merry way, playing his bombastic strid in "Ow" (alias "Perkenana") and dissolving his leader's mocking of tradition in "A.T.F.W.U.S.A.", a carnal solo that is respectful at base.

Mingus introduces the pieces with his familiar tired exasperation. "Nice to have all of you here," he says at the beginning of one side, and it's the hollowest greeting you could wish to hear. The last tune, "Wire Cutters", explores a pastoral mood very rare in his work; the closing passage avan sounds forgiving. But it's mostly in the vein of the rest of this April in Amsterdam – dark and unsparing. These four sides are hard work.

Richard Cook

WAYNE SHORTER

Atlantis

(CBS 26669)

Recorded: 1985.

Endangered Species; The Three Marlas; The Last Silk Hat; When You Dream; Who Goes There!; Atlantis; Shere Khan, The Tiger; Criancas;

On The Eve Of Departure.
Wayne Shorter (ts, ss); Jim
Walker (f); Yaron
Gershowsky (p); Michiko Hill
(p); Larry Klein (b);
Alejandro Acuna (d), plus
Joseph Vitarelli (synth)
Ralph Humphrey (d) Lenny
Castro (perc) on
Endangered Species.

LONG TIME admirers of the immanently intelligent and melodically resourceful saxophone playing of Wayne Shorter – who have spent patient years listening closely to Weather Report records for the odd moments in which his talents contrive to hack their way through that colourful but enveloping undergrowth – are finally rewarded by the re-emergence of one of Coltrane's most original disciples as a solo artist. The result, unfortunately, has been a distinctly mixed bag.

On his recent London concerts end on *Atlantis* – a session that Shorter led and mostly wrote the music for – the saxophonist has clearly made a series of awkward compromises to cater for both the Weather Report market and the MOR fans, but hasn't left very much for devotees of his remarkable improvisatory skills. *Atlantis* actually features rather less of the latter than the Logan Hall shows did, since Shorter in live performance would repeatedly lace the most self-consciously elegant episodes with casually despatched flurries in bridges and codas that would befit the entire proceedings in a sudden and unexpected glow. It has been recorded with a variety of session players, none of whom was on the London gigs, plus a heavenly choir of four women vocalists who put in occasional appearances that sound like ads for wall-to-wall carpeting.

Atlantis opens with a complex, winding mid-tempo soprano theme called "Endangered Species", anchored by a compellingly percussive descending bass riff and full of pernickety harmonic games in which chord patterns flutter about like a formation dance team. "The Three Marlas", a tune faintly reminiscent of Blue Note Herbie Hancock and one of this more successful ventures on the live shows, is an initially wistful soprano theme over tolling, firmly planted piano chords which edges up tempo into funk but takes on its warmest characteristics when Shorter switches to tenor simply to play a series of cumulative honks at the end. Much of this material, though carefully crafted, has a restless, chameleonic quality to it, as if Shorter believes his audience has the attention span of infants.

The album's most successful composition, despite also offering little enough of the playing of Shorter himself, is an elegant ballad called "The Last Silk Hat", a twitt theme that is repeatedly pulled into a jaunty sub-melody first played quirkily by flutes and then more raucously in a thumping, Mingus-like manner.

CBS refers in its accompanying literature to side one of *Atlantis* being Shorter's commercial face, while the flip side represents his 'experimental' work. The latter is certainly inaudible under any definition of 'experimental' I've ever heard, but seems to mean that he plays slightly longer solos. Unquestionably *Atlantis* represents a fair tribute to Wayne Shorter's considerable writing skills and to the immense impact that 15 years with one of the only fusion bands that managed to stay ahead of the game was bound to have. But of that eccentric,

humorous and sometimes breathtakingly audacious improviser there is hardly a whisper. Only a recording of a jam in a band he didn't expect to find himself playing with would be likely to let that spirit out.

John Fordham

ALBERT AYLER

Something Different!!!!!!
(Bird Notes BNL P1)

Recorded: Stockholm - 25 October 1962.

"I'll Remember April;
Rollins's Tune; Tune Up;
Free.

Ayler (ts); Torbörn Hultcrantz (b); Sune Spångberg (d).

The Berlin Concert

(Reliable 001)

Recorded: Berlin - November 1966.

Alpha; A.C.; Omega; Our Prayer; Ghosts; Bells; Jesus.

Don Ayler (t); Albert Ayler (ts); Michael Sampson (vln); Bill Folwell (b); Beaver Harris (d).

THE WORK of a few artists remains difficult for a quite abnormally long period. This is partly because of their special place in history, partly for technical reasons. Schoenberg is the obvious example in 20th-century classical music, and Albert Ayler in jazz. After more than 20 years of listening, few honest people would claim that they find his music easy. That ought to be a point in its favour. But the point of putting these two records together is that they show how far he moved in a short time. One is almost tempted to use that weaselly word, "progress". The 1962 music has, at least initially, a one-dimensional effect because of the virtual absence of any sort of harmonic consciousness: the chord sequence is not really a consideration, nor are the implications of the lines that Hultcrantz is walking. Ayler had to find a new context (now to modern jazz) for his improvising, and by the time of the 1966 European tour had fully done so.

Though it can be heard as an extreme development of some of Rollins's discoveries, Ayler's tone was very much his own, even as early as 1962. There are intriguing "noise" episodes, also, which sometimes intrude on the linear improvisations. More disconcerting is the way in "I'll Remember April" - the longest of all the above performances - that he repeatedly drops back to the original melody. This results in a kind of free rondo, but the theme's returns produce an incongruous effect in relation to what happens in between. It was an indication of Ayler's rapid growth that such incongruities soon disappeared, and there is no sign of them on the Berlin recording.

Ayler's one and only British concert, at the London School of Economics, part of the same 1966 tour, is the sort of occasion that is remembered vividly even by those who were not there. This is partly because those of us who were present have talked about it at such inordinate length ever since. It was taken down by BBC TV and then in a notable act of vandalism the tape was destroyed. The Berlin recording, however, which should be heard in conjunction with Ayler's Jesus LP (Jazz

Gelore 1002), done at Lörmach, Germany, that same month, is a reminder that the music was every bit as good as we said it was.

All the themes - ultra-simple, and virtually devoid of harmonic implications - are Ayler's, and, as noted, there are no foreign elements; in fact the stylistic consistency is one of the most impressive features. The music proceeds by way of a ragged heterophony. Comparisons with early New Orleans bands were made at the time, but, though one still sees the point of these, the ensemble roles are in fact new - the bass's sometimes melodic lines, for example. As the latter part of "Our Prayer" indicates, the violin is the virtuoso of the ensemble rather than the clarinet was in New Orleans jazz. But more to the point is the shifting network of relationships, sometimes with two instruments sharing the lead, at other points with all parts of almost equal importance. Ayler still gives us plenty to think about.

NB. The items on Bird Notes are being promoted in some pieces as never having been available before. In fact they were issued in 1969 on Sonet SNTF604 as Albert Ayler: *The First Recordings*.

Max Harrison

PAUL LOVENS & PAUL LYTTON

The Fetch

(Po Torch PTR/JWD 8)

Recorded: Pisa, 27 June 1980/London, 23 August 1981.

Catching; Catch.
Lovens, Lytton (perc., electronics).

THESE TWO masters of percussion have yet to realize their work to its fullest dimension on vinyl, although *The Fetch* is getting there. What they really need is the opportunity to record in perfect sonic conditions - a luxury that improvised music literally can't afford. Every microtonic and scratch in this teeming world of sticks and cymbals is significant, and the slightest cloud in the sound will obscure.



Still, this unearthly music makes its mark on their third LP of duets. They are a good match: Lovens, who I think works best as a group player, is an exponent of rapid angularities, sharp reverb and crispness; Lytton sifts together a whole cosmos of long swirling shapes and buzzy frequencies. No tempo intrudes to distract from their explorations; the players are unreasonable to a fault. Passages where Lovens chitters nervily across drumskins draw out nothing from Lytton that could be called an 'answer', but they seem to

operate in the same sphere instead of crashing two worlds together.

What does this music convey, as completely abstract as it is? Well, that's up to you.

Richard Cook

STANLEY TURRENTINE

ZT's Blues

(Blue Note)

Recorded: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 13 September 1961.

ZT's Blues, More Than You Know; The Lamp Is Low; The Way You Look Tonight; For Heaven's Sake; I Wish I Knew; Be My Love.

Stanley Turrentine (ts);

Grant Green (g); Tommy

Flanagan (p); Paul

Chambers (b); Art Taylor (d).

THE "UNISSUED material" aspect of this release is noted on the sleeve but not overplayed, which is as well, since the final paragraph of Michael Cusina's essay on the inner reminds us that Blue Note's reputation was often maintained by Al Lion quietly burying sessions that hadn't entirely worked. Well, Al, you were right. Partly it's the contrast between Turrentine's jump-up-and-hit-'em sense of time and Green's ability to delay every note until the last micro-second. Partly also it's the material, which is mostly appropriate to neither of them and serves only to highlight how well they could get in each other's way.

Turrentine comes off best because the light playing of the rhythm section supports his view of the world against Green's, but even so he can do little more than try to raise the ghosts of saxophonists past, to no great effect. Only on "ZT's Blues", written by Tommy Turrentine and reflecting the time when they were together in Max Roach's band, does he show any indication of what an exhilarating player he could be, and here, if anything, the mismatch with Green is further emphasized. This is a distinctly less than great Blue Note session.

Jack Cooke

MAX ROACH

Scott Free

(Soul Note SN 1103)

Recorded: Milan, 31 May 1984.

Scott Free Part I; Scott Free Part II.

Cecil Bridgewater (t, flugelhorn); Odean Pope (ts); Tyrone Brown (electric b); Max Roach (d).

THIS ALBUM is the latest in a remarkable sequence recorded by the nonpareil percussionist for the Soul Note label (of which *Pictures In A Frame* (SN 1033) and *In The Light* (SN 1053) at least are, I think, outstanding). The group format on the present album is a familiar one, with the exception of the presence of Tyrone Brown on electric bass. (It is to be hoped, incidentally, that Roach's replacement of acoustic by electric bass is a temporary departure, since his music very much calls for the greater expressive qualities of the former.)

The album is entirely taken up by a composition by trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater inspired by the case of the Scottsboro Boys who were convicted in 1931 of the rape of two white girls on board a train in Alabama – on insufficient evidence, as it turned out, for they were subsequently exonerated and released though not before serving 15 years in jail. The anti-racialist message is of course one with which Max Roach has been a long and courageous associate, at least as far back as his suite *We Insist – Freedom Now!* "Scott Free" is symmetrical in structure at least insofar as the major middle sections are sandwiched between almost identical opening and closing statements. These are themselves composed of fanfare-like sections surrounding a short middle passage with a rock feel. The middle section of the suite is given unity by the recurrence of a medium/up-tempo theme based on two chords, which is interspersed with faster passages plus unaccompanied and often free solos by each instrument (except trumpet).

In comparison with earlier albums for the label, *Scott Free* is less successful. The main unifying theme (if one can call it that) is too simple harmonically, and the material available to the soloists is, though well-executed, not sufficient to sustain interest over two sides of an LP. But this is only a temporary falling-off from the very high standard of Max Roach's abundant, questing latter-day work. It is this latter achievement which confirms his status as the finest percussionist which modern jazz has produced, and as one of the great representative figures in the history of the music.

Andy Hamilton

CHARLIE SHAVERS

Live From Chicago
(Spotlite SPJ 154)

Recorded: Chicago, 1962.
Undecided; I'm Forever
Blowing Bubbles; St Louis
Blues; What Is This Thing
Called Love; My Funny
Valentine; Rose Room;
Undecided; Pennies From
Heaven; A Tisket A Tasket;
Over The Rainbow; I Want A
Little Girl; Bernie's Tune.
Shavers (t); Larry Novack
(p); Tommy Bryant (b);
Francis Bruce (d).

SHAVERS WAS a fine musician, almost always overshadowed by Armstrong and Eldridge but certainly no second-league player. His technique could be (as is demonstrated on this release) as good as either of the aforementioned trumpeters.

He spent a good deal of his life with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, and from 1937 to 1944 he was with the John Kirby Sextet, where he was responsible for most of the arrangements, and composed two of his most well-known numbers, "Undecided" and "Opus Five". The London House audience is a talkative bunch but this does not inhibit the musicians at all. Both Shavers and Novack play well, with solos and ideas flowing freely. Shavers lays out on the "Tisket" tune and the trio give a swinging treatment to the Ella Fitzgerald hit. There is a lack of Shavers material available at the moment which makes this release all the more important.

David Skinner

JOHN WILLIAMS OCTET

Year of the Buffalo
(Spotlite SPJ532)

Recorded: Woodcrown Manor
Studios, May 19-20 1985.
Inventions suite: F.F.R.B.,
This Is The Year Of The
Buffalo, Snow Palace,
Ricardo's Overture.
John Williams (bs); Peter
Saberton (p, composer, arr);
Martin Speake (as); Nigel
Nash (ts, fl, piccolo); Paul
Nieman (tb); Henry Lowther
(t); Dick Pearce (t on
Ricardo's Overture);
Chucho Merchant (b); Trevor
Tompkins (d).

THIS IS the latest of Spotlite's brave and laudable efforts to keep British jazz before the record-buying public. "Year of the Buffalo" is the title-track of the LP, but it constitutes one movement of the suite "Inventions".

Composed by pianist Pete Saberton, the suite was given its premiere at the last Bracknell Festival in 1984.

"F.F.R.B.", is notable for an atmospheric baritone solo by leader John Williams. The only really up-tempo track is the fourth, "Ricardo's Overture", which is also the best. It contains the highlight of the LP for me, a duet between bassist Chucho Merchant and trombonist Paul Nieman which could have gone on longer, expressing a rhythmic drive lacking in much of the rest of the album. It's also noteworthy for the bassist's (?) production of what sound to me more like whale noises (if Charlie Haden's "Song for the Whales" is anything to go by) than the buffalo sound that the LP's title would suggest (perhaps David Attenborough could adjudicate?).

Pete Saberton is, as always, a lucid pianist, and Martin Speake makes telling contributions on alto. The former's compositions are not unpromising, but could do with greater rigour and I feel that as much with of the original tonal compositions from British writers that can be heard on *Jazz Today* or *Sounds Of Jazz*, there is a lack of that sense of harmonic direction which compels a listener's involvement. But a worthy effort.

Andy Hamilton

DAVEY WILLIAMS

Criminal Pursuits: electric
guitar solos
(trans museq 8)

Recorded: 1985.
Apotheosis Of The Whimsy-
horse; Home; The Razor's
Edge; Violin Concerto;
Prehensile Legends; Call Of
The Chlorophyll; Criminal
Pursuits.
Davey Williams (arc, slide
and object 9).

TWO ALL but opposite points of view: that it matters absolutely to know what an artist intended and how he or she went about fulfilling that intention; and that such information is spurious and irrelevant to a real understanding and appreciation of art. The latter viewpoint likes to 'bracket' the art object or performance, cut its ties and leave it standing alone. Given that improvisation

rarely follows anything as clear-cut as a tone-row or as literary as a programme, few improvising artists expend much effort on communicating their methods.

Guitarist Davey Williams is an exception. On *Crimina/ Pursuits* he lays out for the listener a whole battery of procedures with a baroque vocabulary all their own: the Listening Post, the Burma Shave, the Mocking Bird, the Pianistic Deceleration.

While it's possible to ignore these wholly, they do provide a fascinating entré into the music. On "Prehensile Legends", the Burma Shave and Listening Post are superimposed. Williams likes to think of his music in terms of images; these are "listened to" in the course of playing and improvisation becomes a soundtrack to an inward scenario largely closed to the audience except by inference. With the addition of the Burma Shave Williams flips an easel of automaton placards, 'playing' the images thus exposed. Since on record this is about as helpful to the audience as mime on radio, he dispenses with the placards in the studio. Well spotted.

The Mockingbird, which features on the long title suite – the whole of side two – involves repetition, variation and the inevitable forgetting/misremembering of initial phrases. This is coupled with Pianistic Deceleration, where subsequent phrases are slowed, suspended and repeated "in a manner suggested by some 19th-century works for piano forte".

Proof of the Pudding? Williams is a remarkable guitarist with an almost unlimited range of effects and colours. Some of it, as in "Apotheosis of the Whimsy-horse" or "Violin Concerto", is consciously evocative of natural sound. The other titles are obviously also intended to convey something of the mood of the piece and they are played with an infectious, almost rollicking swing a long way removed from most solo improvisation. We're a long way from either Derek Bailey or Henry Kaiser, though I can imagine Fred Frith getting into this.

Williams insists his is a folk music "fuelled by personal emotions and iconographies at the service of precipitation from an unpredictable front". The influences seem to come from blues and country and many of the most striking passages are played with a bottleneck or slide.

The iconographies are imminently romantic, the emotions nostalgic. "Reality is quite pathetic in these times, a flattened land where there should be a damp stellar jungle, the greener pastures of prehistoric tennis courts along the slopes of icebergs." This, and the increasingly incoherent stuff that follows on the sleeve is the kind of surrealism that works better visually or eurally than in print. Whatever its source, and however it is made, Williams' music does suggest an imaginative alternative to present glooms. I'd say that here it does make sense to understand something of the techniques employed, not least because the suspicion remains that improvisation is nothing more than random, undisciplined sound. Not – or rarely – so. Also because it does prompt a more thoughtful perception of the music.

"Sound images are best approached obliquely in these times. However, it is possible that there is nothing more here than convulsive blues, amplified to rattle a small planet's fabric." Convulsion was, after all, the Surrealists' criterion for beauty.

Brian Morton

JAZZWORD

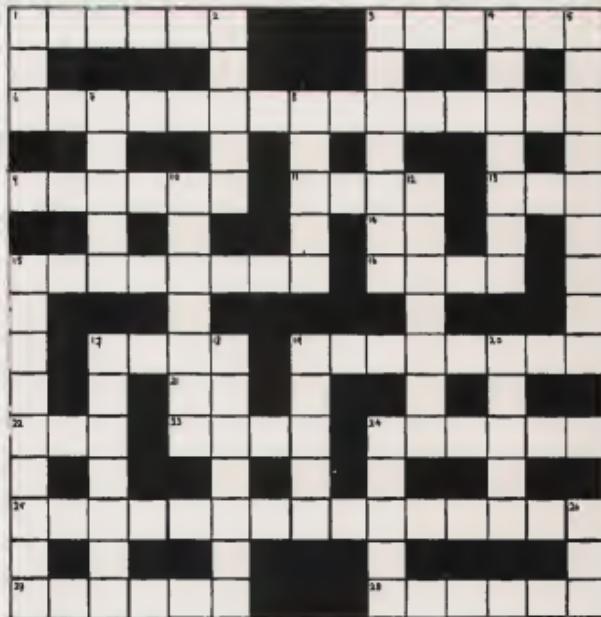
Compiled by Tim Colwell

DOWN

- Conversation is up to scratch (3)
- Cozy hit for lady who jus' growed (5)
- see 1 across
- 4 and 21 across Youngsters who became much-loved pair of swingers (4,3,2)
- Reverse result of 6 across and you have natural brass section (4,5)
- Where Bluesmen often find their mules kickong (5)
- Guitarist Cat is a shorter Napoleon (5)
- Ed's classically puzzling changes (7)
- A couple of short siblings . . . as in 4 perhaps? (3,4)
- Quiet advice to Fats' sweet thing (5,4)
- All the birds twitter when she perambulates along the boulevard! (2,5)
- Benny, Parker, Ornette? Make your own choice but French expression puts one horn at the top (4,3,6)
- Can the Extra-Terrestrial hear a French sound above? It makes something Scandinavian, record-wise (5)
- In vout? Unlike you'll ever find Mr G's Opus at Covent Garden! (5)
- As hip a song as never had canvassing to aid its progress. Underblown Rodgers and Hart vessel (1,4)
- Short little pianiste (3)

ACROSS

- 1 and 3 down "H'-Job on stern, or . . .?" Somebody settled this Bluesman's hash back in the 30's. Your tum! (6,7)
- 3 Drolls (6)
- 6 Natural thing to do with a straight trumpet mute! (4,2,3,4)
- 9 See 23 across
- 11 What some jazz fans live in. (4)
- 13 Does redman Vic simultaneously belong to the anti-lagators? (3)
- 14 Dizzy exclamation! (2)
- 15 Spike Hughes adds another pound to the lady in his 'Second Movement'. Spoils his vacation! (8)
- 16 Look North to add to the German Radio with funk! (4)



- 17 Refuses to contemplate any musical performances in her establishment; traditionally! (4)
- 19 Fictionally, this bird's Last Jump (8)
- 21 See 4 down
- 22 Euphemistic Blue bunt! (3)
- 23 and 9 across Scar ye tart for sign of pianist (4,6)
- 24 Back Door closed years ago . . . but recently re-opened letting Ron back in (6)
- 25 Provocative situation results from arrangement, according to Trane (2,6,3,4)
- 27 Leonard who played with Moten. Near Harlem, we hear (6)
- 28 see 18 down

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Freddie Hubbard; 7 'Air Mail Special'; 9 (Sadik) Hekim; 11 Ivory Joe (Hunter); 13 (Ernie) Royal; 14 (Art) Tatum; 16 Herb (Ellis); 17 Reeds; 18 (Phil) Upchurch; 19 Bobbi Humphrey; 23 'Strange (Fruit)'; 25 and 5 down Rashied Ali; 26 Stan (Kenton)

DOWN: 1 Frankie Trumbauer; 2 Earl Bostic; 3 Ella (Fitzgerald); 4 Brecker Brothers; 6 (Satin) Doll'; 8 Andy (Kirk); 9 Helen Humes; 10 (Big Maybelle); 12 (Rudi) Blech; 15 (Berry) Maupin; 20 ('Almca' Brass); 21 (George) Wein; 22 Rye; 24 Nat (Cole)

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH.



THE WRITE PLACE

Your letters edited this month by JAYNE HOUGHTON

ON YOUR KNEES!

THE LETTER from M. Bender in October's *Wire* echoes my own uneasiness about the recent direction of your magazine. I started reading you in the hope of getting information and comment about contemporary improvised music. (No, I don't mean Wynton and Branford.) Although I can buy records of Free music made by musicians all over the world I find it impossible to discover any real coverage about this music. On occasion you have written something about musicians playing this kind of thing and occasionally discussed the music. But in recent issues I detect a tendency for you to become more like the standard jazz mag: a repetitive mixture of geography and history.

Of course, Miles, Art, Charlie, Duke, Ornette, Mingus et al are all wonderful, wonderful people and we should never be allowed to forget that but do we really need another megazine joining in the perpetual genuflection? Most jazz magazines come on like high-priced publicity handouts and I imagine I was not the only person who was hoping *The Wire* would be something better than that. I'm still hoping.

T.H. Barton, N1

Perpetual genuflection? We can't win. Put down a well-respected cat and we're monsters; say they're great and we're creeps. You will still find more improvised music in this magazine than any other - in reviews, features or whatever. But we have many areas and viewpoints to discuss. Agitate, educate, organize - RC.

SMART!

CONGRATULATIONS ON making the big time, although maybe now is the time to take stock. I detect some disturbing trends. Issue 19: "An Editor's idea" refers to "the sharpest, smartest team of critics on planet Earth". Page 48 confirms it. The Annie Whitehead review is certainly smart (as in smartarse) but sharp? My dictionary says "Smart... perceptive, clear cut, well defined". The only thing I can perceive of this album from your

review is that it is carnivalesque. Should I buy a carnivalesque album - is it this month's flavour or a major new movement? C'mon, you're not writing for impressionable kids any more Richard - I can read crap like this in *NME*.

Same issue, page 27 (Boyd Price). My taste is catholic but this isn't 'jazz, improvised music' or even 'and...' (Yes it is - Ed.) Is it significant that this sub-title has been dropped from the latest issue? (We got tired of it - Ed.) Beck to "An Editor's idea" (Issue 19), asking for details of any dates of interest to *Wire* readers. When submitted, I find in Issue 20 only a selective listing. Obviously, it is more important that Miles Davis meet Nik Kershaw than the fact that Ronnie Scott is appearing in Nottingham. Surely your duty is to inform and let the public decide what's worth supporting?

Other magazines are happy to include ALL dates submitted to them, regardless of musical direction, policy or prejudice, why not you? What's needed now is an 80s version of *Jazz Journal*, not a glossy *NME*.

Stick with the music.

Guy Sowerby, Nottingham Jazz

On the whole, any information imparted to the news desk *WITHIN* the deadline date is included in the subsequent issue. Unfortunately, 60% of received items plod belatedly through our letter-box when this date is galloping rapidly off the calendar. We would be more than happy to double the size of the news section and incorporate an extensive club date column providing our plaintive phone calls to 'behind the deadline' promoters and venues are acknowledged.

Incidentally your remark about "impressionable kids" - is it necessary to make comments striking of elitism such as this? We intend harnessing the enthusiasm generated from these "impressionable kids" in order to keep alive and kicking the music YOU feel so precious about. Finally, we'd be mortally wounded to be considered either an Eighties JJ or a glossy *NME*, so after a hasty office vote we've decided to scrap the full colour pullout of Nik Kershaw scheduled for next month's issue. Rest assured - we ARE sticking with the music! - JH.

WELL, THIS GUY LIKES US

PEOPLE, WHAT can I say? *The Wire* is every bit as good as I'd expected. When I heard that the best writer on the *NME* was to become your Editor, I couldn't wait to get hold of a copy. Of your writers, Look, Fox, Sinker, Dallas, Kimberley and Case all are familiar to me and are all excellent! Anyway - an excellent publication which leaves ye olde *Jazz Journal* well behind!

Jon Carr, Louth

Well, Mrs Cook (by the way an interesting pseudonym), we're very pleased that your son has settled down so well! He's far too modest to reply in person but says not to worry, he's wearing his vest and promises to write soon! - JH.

I AM A CAMERA (HATER)

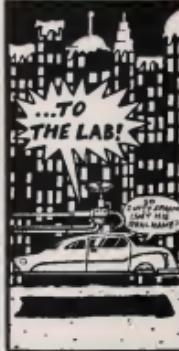
I'M SADDENED to see that you are actually encouraging the hoards of parasitic photographers who appear not to wish to listen to the music themselves, but are allowed a free rein to run around the auditorium spoiling other people's listening.

My thanks will go to these artists who will refuse to play until all the photographers are cleared out. Audiences and artists who are passive enough to try and interact through a curtain of clickers merely demonstrate their mutual contempt for each other and the music.

Sam Baxter, SW13

Surely you'd also be saddened to plough through reams of writing without any visual light relief? Remember the old adage - a good picture is worth a thousand words? Our photographic content would be very poor should we insist our sheepish stod at the very rear of the auditorium. The result? An unidentifiable object on stage flanked by hundreds of heads... hardly constitutes a good photo, eh? Besides, if you're waiting for an artist to turn down huge photographic exposure in several magazines to alleviate your problem, I suggest you don't hold your breath - JH.

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CRACK



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1. *Riker's Island* (Elmo Hope) 2. Archie Shapp 3. The MJQ 4. "It takes that long to get it all in" 5. "Try taking the horn out of your mouth, man" 6. Sonny Rollins (from *The Alternative Sonny Rollins*) 7. Billy Strayhorn 8. Crazy (Shorty Rogers' *Cool And Crazy*) 9. Pee Wee Russell 10. Bud Powell; and there wasn't one! 11. Lester Young (who didn't record with Benny Moten's band) 12. Eddie Lang 13. Duke Pearson, *Merry Olde Soul* 14. Johnny Griffin on *The Kenny Dancers* 15. Six foot seven inches 16. Billie Holiday 17. Coleman Hawkins 18. They were all born on March 19!

19. June Christy 20. Bob Wilber and Kenny Davern 21. C and B Flat 22. (a) Mugsy Spanier (b) Jelly Roll Morton on "Sidewalk Blues" (c) Fats Waller on "My Very Good Friend The Milkman" (d) Miles Davis 23. (a) Brotzmann and Bennink (b) Ronald Shannon Jackson (c) Victor Feldman (d) Roland Kirk (e) Cecil Taylor 24. Peggy Lee 25. Trumpet 26. "Open The Door Richard" in 1947/27. All were born on Christmas Day 28. Lionel Hampton—Kentucky-born. The rest are from Illinois 29. (a) Abbey Lincoln (b) Mel Lewis (c) Andy Razaf (d) Connie Kay (e) Louie Austin 30. (a) Art Pepper (b) Nat Cole (c) Woody Herman (d) Jo Stafford 31. (a) Duke Ellington (b) John

Dankworth (c) Teo Macero (d) Lalo Schifrin (e) Tom Scott

How did you do? One point for each correct answer, maximum 49. Give yourself 50 if you got them all. You're a genius.

40-48 Very smart. You know plenty.
 30-39 Pretty on-the-ball.
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